

THE IMPACT OF THE WAR ON DRUGS: AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS
THROUGH A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

by

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this body of work to all my loved ones, sisters, Tamatha and Latecha, and brothers. To my late grandmother, Ms. Mary Frances Jones who instilled in me a sense of duty and love for family.

To my parents, Ms Norma Hubbard and late Mr. Harold Maroney for teaching me that faith and perseverance in the face of adversity is the key to success. This invaluable lesson came handy during my years of school. I shall forever cherish that. I know that at times the road to accomplishing this success was rocky and bumpy but you stood by me. I thank you for the invaluable lessons and experiences. My life would not be complete without you. You have been my bedrock and without you who knows how different life would have been for me. However, I would not trade a minute of my life for any other. Thanks to all others who were instrumental towards this accomplishment for your love, encouragement, dedication, and support throughout my years of education. Thank you for your patience and inspiration. This one is for us.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of African-American women who have been impacted by incarceration based on drug offense. Studies have indicated that in last twenty years, women have been incarcerated at a much higher rate than their male counterparts (Bureau of Statistics Bulletin, 2009; Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Harrison & Beck, 2003). African-American women have the highest imprisonment rate (Tonry, 1995; Nunn, 2002). As a result, this study attempted to portray the impact of the war on drugs on African-American women while considering all the factors relevant to their incarceration phenomenon.

This qualitative study was conducted with a sample of 10 African-American women residing in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. A phenomenological approach was used to extract information from the participants through in-depth interviews. The approach was best suited for this study given the nature of the research.

The study found that women were drawn to the drug culture for various reasons amongst which are peer pressure, naiveté, and unresolved emotional issues. Furthermore, the study found that the incarceration of the women had far more reaching consequences especially on families when children are involved. Additionally, the study affirmed that during the

incarceration of women, the kingship system of care giving for the children left behind remained the most popular practice amongst African-American women.

In conclusion, the study corroborated the findings of earlier studies. However, the study concluded that children lacked any therapeutic intervention during their mother's incarceration. Children of the mothers in this study received no intervention to help them cope with their loss and grief over their mother's absences. Based on this assertion, there is a policy implication in providing therapy for children of school age by the schools, the courts, and other social agencies. There is also a need for mandatory training, education and trades skills knowledge for imprisoned women. Further research needs to be conducted on how to best provide a wraparound care for children and family members when a mother of children is incarcerated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988 in the United States has caused an explosion in the incarceration rates in the nation's prisons (Bush-Baskette, 2000; Blumstein, 1998). Some have argued that with this explosion have come added costs. Similarly Bush-Baskette (2000) argued that the incarceration of any one translates to fiscal cost.

One notable area of cost is the harm done to families and communities (Bush-Baskette, 2000; Lowenstein, 1986). Barry (1985) noted that the incarceration of women poses a unique problem. According to Barry (1985), incarceration of a woman affects children and extends beyond the disruption to the woman's life, or the public resources vital to sustaining her in prison. Other hidden effects are the trauma which the children endured during her absence, guardianship issues, and other related caretaker costs (Barry, 1985; Baunach, 1985; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Bush-Baskette, 2000; Frye & Dawe, 2008). It is estimated that about 65 percent of the women in prison today are mothers and of this number approximately 50 percent of them were primary care providers prior to their incarceration (Barry, 1985). The incarceration of women for drug-related offense offenses robs children of the nurturing that they deserve for holistic development. Van Wormer and Bartollas (2000) said in a study that locking women up places emotional, psychological, and social burdens on the child as well as the surrogate caretaker. Phillips and Harm (2000) observed that the separation of women due to incarceration from their children often meant some displacement and transition in the children's lives. Given this assertion, (Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000) noted that few children get to visit with their mothers during periods of incarceration due to the limited numbers of female prison facilities as well as the remoteness of the locations of these prisons. The pair estimated that approximately only nine percent of children visited their mothers while they were incarcerated.

The incarceration of women is complex and multifaceted (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Covington & Bloom, 2003; Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Sudbury, 2004). This study attempted to delineate some of the problems that are encountered when incarceration of a woman occurs. Some of the problems associated with females' incarceration are the impact of such incarceration on the women as well as those they left behind.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A number of studies have indicated that in recent years, women have been incarcerated at a much higher rate than their male counterparts (Bureau of Statistics Bulletin, 2009; Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Harrison & Beck, 2003). Between 1986 and 2008 there has been a steady increase in the number of women incarcerated. The number stood at 22,777 in 1986 and by 2003 it rose to 100,102 women incarcerated in state and federal prisons comprising 6-9 percent of all persons within the prison walls (Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Harrison & Beck, 2003). By the end of 2005 there were 253,300 state prison inmates serving time for drug offenses. Of that number, 113,500 (44.8%) were black, 51,100 (20.2%) were Hispanic, and 72,300 (28.5%) were white (Sabol, 2008).

Following this observation, several researchers have advanced various theories and reasons in support of the phenomenon. The aim of this paper was also to highlight some of the reasons why women are incarcerated at a much higher rate specifically African-Americans. As a result, this study attempted to portray the impact of the war on drugs on African-American women while considering all the factors relevant to their incarceration phenomenon. To bring this project to fruition, the accounts of African-American women who have been incarcerated through the law enforcement efforts of the war on drugs formed the basis of the discussion on the phenomenon.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of African-American women who have been impacted by incarceration based on drug offense. A phenomenological

approach was employed to gain knowledge into what contributes to understanding the implications of the war on drugs on women. According to Creswell (2003), "... certain types of research problems call for specific approaches" (p. 21). A phenomenological approach is appropriate due to the exploratory nature of this study and the need for an in-depth understanding of African-American women's perceptions regarding the impact of the war on drugs. The aim of the study was to use the perceptions of African American women to add breadth, depth, and broaden discussions on the issue of female incarcerations to the already existing knowledge.

1.3 Research Questions

Glesne (2006) stated that "... a research project is an effort to remedy the ignorance that exists about something" (p. 29). There are three general areas of research questions namely: descriptive, difference, and relationship (Drew, 1980; Parsons & Brown, 2002). For purposes of this research and in phenomenological studies, descriptive questions were utilized. Descriptive questions are exploratory and seek to discover what "something is like" (Parsons & Brown, 2002, p. 19). In qualitative phenomenological research, the goal is to give greater understanding of the perceptions, thoughts, and processes. In keeping with traditions of phenomenological approach, open-ended questions were used for this study.

Cozby (2004) suggested that "... open ended questions are most useful when the researcher needs to know what people are thinking and how they naturally view their world..." Creswell, (1998) contended that "... research questions often start with *how* or a *what* so that the initial forays into the topic describe what is going on" (p. 17). Maxwell (1996) also emphasized that "...your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding" (p. 74). On those notes, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How did your life change following your encounter with the drug culture?
2. What expectations did you have during court hearings?

3. How did you perceive the effect of trauma on your child[ren] during your period of incarceration?

1.4 Rationale for the Study

Given that there have been several accounts of the rising numbers of women incarcerated; some studies have examined the different facets of this phenomenon. However, there are limited phenomenological studies that have examined perceptions of African-American women and the impact of the drug culture in its entirety from a regional perspective. The rationale for the study was to understand the perspective of North Texas African-American women's experiences who have served time in different prisons around the United States while adding depth to existing knowledge. There is also a need to add to the existing knowledge given the changing dynamics in the phenomenon. The idea is to discover and expand new thinking within the context of African-American women's involvement in the drug culture.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Researchers define terms so that readers can understand their specific meaning (Creswell, 2003). Parsons and Brown (2002) stated that "...because terms can be vague, subjective, and open to many different interpretations, they must be defined in a more objective and precise manner" (p. 33). The pair further emphasized that researchers increase impartiality and accuracy when they operationally define the terms that are germane to the research questions. As a result, the following key terms are operationally defined for this study:

Children: For purposes of this research, children refer to those below 18 years of age at the time of their mother's incarceration.

Mules: For purposes of this study a woman who transports illicit drugs in commercial quantity for a dealer.

Phenomenology: Study of phenomena relating the experiences of a person. Also a philosophical study of human experiences as portrayed by the joint of participants themselves.

Possession for sale: A law enforcement terminology for drugs in one's possession at time of arrest intended for sale to users/consumption by users.

Interviewer bias: Intentional or unintentional influence exerted by an interviewer in such a way that the actual or interpreted behavior of respondents is consistent with the interviewer's expectations (Cozby, 2004).

Reflexivity: The inner thought that allows the researcher to probe self as part of the setting, situation, and social phenomenon one is seeking to understand (Glesne, 2006; Schwandt, 1997).

War: In this study, it refers to the law enforcement efforts to crack down on the drug culture which began during the Nixon era and intensified under the Reagan through Clinton presidencies.

Women: For purposes of this study, women refer to African-American women over the age of 18 years who served time totaling over six months in a US prison due to a drug conviction.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, the following assumptions were made:

Being former inmates convicted on drug charges, potential participants provided new insights into the impact of the law enforcement war on drugs and women.

War on drugs in many ways are disruptive to the lives of women, children, families, and communities. Interpretation or meaning of a phenomenon was supported in ways to allow for new and in-depth understanding (Creswell, 1998). Participants volunteered to take part in the study and answered all questions candidly.

1.6 Delimitations

According to Creswell (2003), delimitations clearly describe the limits of the research process. Wolcott (2001) stated that having unmistakably written delimitations help formulate a defined statement of purpose. This research was restricted to African-American women over the

ages of 18 who had been incarcerated for over a six months period at a time in a United States prison and are currently living in the North Texas, Dallas/Fort Worth metropolis. The participants were also restricted to those with over six months of community residency. This study did not include other people who had experienced incarceration and were living in half way houses or other transitional homes as a condition of their release to the community.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter the researcher outlined the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of study and the philosophical perspective. The chapter also provided the research questions, rationale, and definition of terms, assumptions, and delimitations of the study. Additionally, the researcher discussed the philosophical approach as well as the theoretical perspectives of the study

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Theory and Literature

The war on drugs changed the landscape for incarceration in the American penal system (Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Robert, 1991; Sudbury, 2004). As a result, African-American women were incarcerated in disproportionate numbers than any other group of women in the country. In this chapter, the author discussed the theoretical explanation for such a steep rise in the incarceration of African-American women. In so doing, the author employed the Anomie/Strain theory to offer such explanations. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory provided the insight into the familial impact of incarceration of African-American women, their children, and the community in general. Additionally, the author explored through a review of literature, the reason for the African-American women's involvement in the drug culture as well as the impact such involvement has on children. Also the author provided the statistics and the drugs of choice of women who are incarcerated in American prisons.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

How one views the phenomena under exploration is determined by the theoretical framework employed (Glesne, 2006; Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990). The Anomie/Strain theory was utilized to explain the "need" basis of the phenomena. Also, the study employed the Bronfenbrenner ecological model to determine the impact of incarceration of a woman where children are involved in her life.

2.2.1 Anomie/Strain theory

The Anomie/strain theory emerged wherein Merton saw the need to explain the sociological impact of the Great Depression and the effects on society. In his quest to explain the crime context at the time, he put forward the theory. The theory has since expanded into

other spheres while concentrating on the role of stress on the commission of crime (Bivins, no date).

Agnew (2001) in his seminal work identified four factors that increase the probability that strain will result in a delinquent response. He concluded that variables such as equity, magnitude, social control, and incentive or pressure to employ a delinquent coping strategy impact criminal behavior. Based on the aforementioned position, African-American women delve into the drug culture perhaps due to some of these variables previously outlined. To substantiate this claim, Andia, et al. (2003), conducted a study on role strain and/deprivation with 561 Puerto Rican injection drug users in New York and 313 in Puerto Rico. In the study, they concluded that the likelihood of risk behaviors are not only related to negative consequences associated with strain but with the specific behaviors required for role obligations such as goal blockage or pain avoidance behaviors.

Broidy and Agnew (1997) suggested that there exist differences in types of crime between males and females due to strain. In corroboration, Jang and Johnson (2005) in a study on religiosity and gender in crime commission concluded that there was partial evidence to support the earlier position of Broidy and Agnew. They instead discovered that there were differential effects of distinct emotional responses to strain.

Jang and Johnson (2005) posited on a specific type of behavioral coping which the pair likened to be a function of other- rather than self-directed emotions. In support of the previous position of strain theory, they also found a consistency with Broidy and Agnew's (1997) proposition that females are less likely than males to act in response to a given level of strain with severe and violent crime, as a result, partly, of gender differences in mediating social factors.

In corroboration of the above notion, Wester, McDonald, and Lewis (2008) observed that strains or stressors generate negative emotions which at some point become unbearable due to buildup. Wester et al. (2008) further suggested that once the stressors reach an

intolerable level, chances are a person seeks a corrective action to either curtail or get rid of strain. The authors cautioned that often times this corrective action may be adaptive or may also be criminal in nature. This explanation reinforces the gender issue of emotionality and deviance. Studies have suggested that wherein males will engage in violence, females tended to engage in crimes that are of less intensity.

Goddard et al. (2000) in a study on "*Profiles of delinquency: A comparison of delinquent behavioral groups*" noted gender differences in the types of delinquencies. They determined that males are more likely to dabble into violent acts such as assault. The group also suggested that males are more likely to be arrested. On the contrary, females are more likely to engage in crimes that did not involve violence (Goddard et. al 2000).

Evidence shows that males are more physically aggressive than their female counterparts (Virgil, 2003). Similarly, Vigil (2003) emphasized that culture conflict, poverty, family, and school problems often impact the female perception of strain leading up to delinquency. Given this assertion, gender differences in strains leading to delinquency determine the nature of crime committed. Therefore, one can argue that one's gender impacts the perception in strain and to opportunities, therefore, the nature of crime a given gender commits.

There is a correlation between race and stress levels in the United States. Gabbidon and Peterson (2006) investigated stress level among African-Americans in relations to strain theory. The authors looked at variables that contribute to stressor among Africa-Americans. They used Multivariate analysis measures on a quality of life index to determine if the index of stressors of everyday life among African-Americans. Their aim of their study was to determine if there was a strong tie to negative quality of life. The authors found a relationship between stressful life events and the quality of life index.

Furthermore, they suggested that stressors have a profound effect, as one would predict on the quality of life and delinquency. They argued that that living while African-

American or being a Black American does significantly affect one's quality of life. Kauffman et al. (2008) in a study "*A general strain theory of racial differences in criminal offending*" concluded that African-Americans experience more and different types of strains than Whites, especially those types of strain most conducive to crime.

Based on the various perspectives and views of strain theory demonstrated by the different studies; it is pertinent to understand why the African-American women are entangled in the drug culture. Studies have demonstrated that incarcerated women are least likely to be educated, be more stressed in their relationships, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and have mental health issues. These societal predicaments therefore, place African-American women amongst the most stressed groups. As a result, African-American women are prone to engage in corrective actions that are negative or criminal.

It is safe to say that the stressors of society place African-American women in a position of vulnerability for incarceration. Based on the premise of the strain theory, African-American women are susceptible to societal pressures given their limited or lack of resources (Kauffman et al., 2008; Gabbidon & Peterson, 2006; Robert, 1991).

2.2.2 Ecological Model

The ecological theory purports that the mother's position within the family unit is pivotal in a child's development. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1997) Ecological Model, children's understanding of their place in the family and the broader community begins in the family. The ecological model posits that the family provides foundation and is considered the paramount place for the child to be given support and care, and to establish a sense of normalcy and wholesomeness. According to West (2000), when separation from a caregiver occurs, enduring relationship of attachment and bonding are compromised. West (2000) further contended that these emotional principles are crucial for physical, intellectual, and moral development. Other leading experts in the field have also suggested there are links between the parent or caregiver, family, and community to child development outcome. Forcible separation of a

mother from her children due to incarceration disrupts the emotional stability, coping skills, resiliency, strengths, coping mechanisms, cognitive competence, and a sense of self-worth (Arafat & Boothby, 2003; Loughry & Eyber, 2003; Stichick Betancourt, 2001; Summerfield, 1999; Tolfree, 1996).

Frye and Dawe (2008) examined the post-release concerns of incarcerated women in the United States and their children. They noted that women offenders and their children symbolized a starkly dispossessed and marginalized group. In their observation, they concluded that for many of the children, the very risk factors that led to their own mother's incarceration were present in the children's current lives. According to the authors, such risk factors made it rife for an intergenerational susceptibility to poor developmental outcomes. Furthermore, this observation by Frye and Dawe, substantiates the claim by a number of other studies that suggest children of incarcerated women are likely to become delinquent themselves.

Frye and Dawe (2008), cautioned chances are that providing an intensive individualized parenting intervention in the post-release period may help improve family functioning. Their conclusion lends credence to the belief among child development experts that the family, more so the mother, serves as the foundation for nurturing, bonding, attachment, and all other developmental outcome. On this notion, it comes as no surprise that with the incarceration of the mother, her children tend to become delinquents themselves

2.3 Historical Background

According to records in the past, women were given community sanctions in lieu of prison sentences. Following the introduction of the war on drugs policy by the Nixon administration in 1972, consequent administrations ushered in stiffer penalties on offenders (Moore & Elkavich, 2008). Sudbury (2005) noted that the current state of the war on drugs was introduced by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s and formalized in the 1986 Anti Drug Abuse Act.

Given the increased effort to curb the drug culture and drug related violence, the United States government, along with other governments of the world, intensified efforts to eradicate the drug culture. Their strategy included the application of methods targeted towards addressing illicit drug use and supply. As a result, this approach has incorporated the increased allocation of resources to policing efforts. The underlying proposition in this is that the United States government prioritized the punishment of drug users and the pursuit of drug dealers through law enforcement interventions (Government of Canada, 2008; Elovich & Drucker, 2008; Roberts, Trace, & Klein, 2004; Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2009).

The law enforcement's new found mandate consequently produced the high incarceration rates especially for minority women. Against this backdrop, Robert (1991) argued that the American war on drug culture is an assault on the autonomy of African-American women. She emphasized that the war on drugs is a complex interaction of race and gender inequality. Robert (1991) stated that African-American women have been specifically targeted for punishment ".....a result of an inseparable combination of their gender, race, and economic status" (p. 1424). Similarly, Boyd (2004) noted that the Canadian drug policy is racialized, class-biased, and gendered. She suggested that there are parallels in the US drug policy. Yet other studies have alluded to the growing concern that women of color and minority women are more likely to be arrested or jailed for any violations of drug policy (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000a; Covington & Bloom, 2003). This singular notion then provides the impetus for the increased numbers of women especially the African-American women who are filling the prisons.

Covington and Bloom (2003) observed that the war on drugs has appreciably affected the incarceration of all women. However, they emphasized that African-American women have experienced the greatest increase in the percentage of offenders incarcerated for drug offenses. Mauer & Huling, (1995) had argued similarly, citing the Sentencing Project report, between 1986 and 1991, they noted the population in state prisons for drug offenses inflated by 828

percent for African-American women, 328 percent for Latinas, and 241 percent for white women. Yet others have emphasized that nationwide, the number of women incarcerated for drug offenses rose by 888 percent between 1986 and 1996 (Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999).

2.4 Statistics

According to published reviews and studies, the incarceration rate for women has been on the increase in the last twenty years (Greenfield & Snell, 1999). Prior figures of the overall prison population showed that from 1985 to 1995 there was an increase from 265,010 to 509,828 representing 192 percent. In 1985 women formed 8 percent or 19,077 inmates of the jail population. By the 1990 the number had jumped to 9.2 percent and by 1995 soared to 10.2 percent or 52,136 women in the overall prison population. Those numbers suggest a hike of 273 percent from 1985 (Veysey, 1997; Galliard & Beck, 1996).

Other reports contend that between 1986 and 2003 there has been a steady increase in the number of women incarcerated. The number stood at 22,777 in 1986 and by 2003 it rose to 100,102 women incarcerated in state and federal prisons comprising 6-9 percent of all persons within the prison walls (Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Harrison & Beck, 2003).

In 2009, report shows that 1 in every 300 black females was incarcerated compared to about 1 in every 1,099 white females and 1 in every 704 Hispanic females (Bureau of Statistics Bulletin, 2009). The report also showed that minorities to be more of the prisoners in the United States. Furthermore, the records indicated that African-Americans and Hispanics have the highest incarceration rate in the US prisons. However, overall analysis, African-Americans has the highest imprisonment rate (Tonry, 1995; Nunn, 2002).

Furthermore, the report demonstrated that 93 percent of the prisoners were majority males and seven percent were women under state and federal prisons. Besides, the report acknowledged that as of June 30, 2009, state and federal correctional authorities had authority over 1,617,478 prisoners, an increase of 0.5percent (7,719 prisoners) since December 31, 2008. Additionally, the report suggested that males were incarcerated at a rate 15 times higher

than females. Though males represented the overall population of the prison system, the female incarceration rate has had more adverse effect and proven more problematic (Covington & Bloom, 2003). The numbers for female incarceration present far more reaching challenges to public policy (Sudbury, 2005).

Concern over the growing number of females in prisons has attracted a lot of attention. Covington and Bloom (2003) published that in recent decades, the number of women under criminal justice supervision has increased noticeably. They argued that in 1990, there were an estimated 600,000 women in prisons or jails, on probation, or on parole in the United States. They further suggested that in 2000, the figure had jumped to more than one million women. The authors observed that though the rate of imprisonment for women continued to be far lower than the rate for men (58 of 100,000 women as opposed to 896 of 100,000 men), the number of women locked up in the United States since 1980 has increased. This rate has approached nearly double the rate for men though there does not appear to be a resultant increase in women's criminality.

Despite the numbers, policy advocates believe that men form a greater number of people incarcerated, however, female incarcerations have kept pace with those of their male counterparts (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Kappeler & Porter, 2005). As a result of the incarceration rates of females, other unforeseen public policy issues have arisen.

2.5 Reasons for female entanglement in the war on drugs

Flanders (1994) in a report for Fairness in Accuracy Reporting (FAIR) asserted that based on the FBI's statistics women were being arrested for infractions that involved non-violent crimes. To buttress her point, she emphasized that women's share of arrest for murder, aggravated assault, and robbery showed a one percent increase from 10 percent to 11.3 percent in 1992. She also noted that women were in prison for reasons such as shoplifting, check forgery, welfare fraud, substance abuse crimes and "possession for sale" of illegal drugs.

Some studies have argued that unintentionally, the war on drugs policy became a war

on women (Covington & Bloom, 2003; Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Sudbury, 2004). Covington and Bloom (2003) emphasized that between 1995 and 1996, female drug arrests increased by 95 percent, while the same offense arrests for males increased by 55 percent. Moore and Elkavich (2008) observed that the greater than before imprisonment of users amounted to a measure of success for the war on drugs thereby fueling the incarceration rate which included women.

Covington and Bloom (2003) argued that racial disparity is a factor in the arrests, pretrial treatment, and sentencing of female offenders. They further noted that women of color, especially African-Americans, are disproportionately incarcerated in the United States. Furthermore, in 1999, African-American women were nearly eight times more likely to be incarcerated than white women (Bureau of Justice, 2000a, Covington & Bloom, 2003). They attributed the sudden increase of incarcerated women of color to be a key feature in the population explosion in women's prisons (Covington & Bloom, 2003).

Robert (1991) argued the number of women of color in prison has increased 800 percent, compared to a 400 percent increase for women of all races. She contended that the increase is due to an intended assault on African-American women rather than a coincidence. She suggested that the increase partially government policies to control the reproductive lives and restrict the autonomy of African-American women. In the same vein, Tonry (1995) proffered a thesis, which generated a significant amount of controversy. Tonry (1995) argued that the racial disparities in the criminal justice system were not merely coincidence, but the result of a calculated attempt foreordained to increase the percentages of African-Americans in prison.

Mauer, et.al (1999) noted that nationwide female incarceration due to drug related offenses rose by 888 percent between 1986 and 1996. Other studies show that in state prisons, 40 percent of women as opposed to 32 percent of men reported drug use at the time of their crimes (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). A 1998 report of the *National Institute of Justice* indicated that more women in prisons used drugs more frequently than their male counterparts.

Karberg and James (2005), indicated sixty nine percent of incarcerated mothers have substance dependence or abuse.

It is noted that women in the U.S correctional systems are mostly young, poor, undereducated women of color, with complex histories of trauma and substance abuse (Covington & Bloom, 2003; Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Harrison& Beck, 2003; Sudbury, 2004). Bloom and Covington (1998) acknowledged the greatest needs of these females are for multifaceted drug abuse and trauma recovery treatment. The pair also alluded to the need for education and training in job and parenting skills. They cautioned that it is vital that all of these factors be addressed to reduce and prevent the continuing increase in female incarceration.

Other studies have similarly suggested that the African-American women get entangled in the justice system for economic and psychosocial reasons (Frye & Dawe, 2008; Shamaï & Kochal, 2008; Sudbury, 2005). Among other variables that have received the consideration of the experts are socioeconomic status, mental health of the women prior to incarceration, educational background, and other social issues that females faced. These factors have contributed to the incarceration rate of African- American women.

2.5.1 Economic reasons

It has been argued that socioeconomic status (SES) contributed to the high incarceration rates of women (Flanders, 1994; Weissman et al., 2003; Sudbury, 2005). The population of incarcerated women remains highly those without much means (Sudbury, 2005). Female increasing numbers in the justice system have been attributed to a larger extent economic circumstance. Price and Sokoloff (2004) posited that prostitution and other minor property crimes formed a part of female arrest records. However, other studies have provided the direct link of women in the war on drugs to other extenuating circumstances.

Among other economic factors that have contributed to the incarceration of women is lack of education (Bloom & Covington, 1998). Research has shown that the majority of the women arrested, charged, and convicted for drug related crimes lacked formal education beyond the

high school level (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Bloom & Covington, 1998; Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Price & Sokoloff, 2004). Furthermore, lack of a substantive formal education often translates to deficiency in real skills for employability and marketability in the workforce.

Towards this end, drug culture may prove an escape or coping mechanism.

2.5.2 Social reasons

Sudbury (2005) stressed that economic need; threats and coercion; and deception by their loved ones or associates have contributed to women's entanglement in the war on drugs. She further argued that women sometimes are faced with poverty and a need to support the family. Based on this assertion, women may engage in deviant behaviors such as using the drug as a coping mechanism.

Sudbury further contended that when women are faced with such adversity, may make the choice to risk carrying drugs (mules), and in the process, convincing themselves it will be a one-time venture. The notion is that the 'drug run' will be one time at which point enough financial gains will prove worthwhile at which point they will disengage from drug runs. In the same token, Tonry (2003) that war on drugs was against people with no viable work prospects, or prospects paying only the minimum wage, drug dealing appears to promise material rewards available nowhere else.

Wester et al. (2008) noted that when there is a disruption in the family structure by human behavior such a divorce, it could adversely affect family income, financial wealth, and the recipient's material values. The group further argued that such a disruption could foment in delinquent behaviors notable amongst behaviors such as stealing, fraud, selling drugs or other corrective actions, including drug use or running away. To avoid the thoughts and emotions caused by strain a woman may engage in the drug culture as a means cope (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Yet other researchers have noted the importance of the environment on the drug culture on African-American women. Some of the position is that the physical environment of

the incarcerated women presented the opportunity for engagement in the drug culture. This is often accomplished through one's social network in the community (Goddard et. al, 2000). Tonry (1995) believes the planners of the drug war knew their decision to increase penalties for drug possession and sale would adversely and disproportionately affect African Americans because while white middle-class drug use was declining, other data showed that drug use among poor, urban African Americans and Hispanics remained steady. He further noted that the policy makers knew that drug abuse was declining among the vast majority of the population. According to Tonry (1995), they knew that drug use was not declining among disadvantaged members of the urban underclass. On that notion, policy makers knew that the war on drugs would be fought mainly in the minority areas of American cities and that those arrested and imprisoned would disproportionately be minorities.

2.5.3 Psychological reasons

Unresolved emotional problems have accounted for women's entanglement in the drug culture (Bush-Baskette, 2000; Covington & Bloom, 2003; Giffus, 2011; Strozier, Armstrong, Skuza, Cecil, & McHale (2011). To substantiate this claim, Veysey (1997) reported that based on a 1994 study of women in U.S. jails, it was discovered that an estimated 22 percent of the women had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Additionally, he suggested that fourteen percent of women in jails had been diagnosed with major depression as well.

According to research, female inmates are three times more likely than their male counterparts to report having experienced physical or sexual abuse at some time in their lives. It is also evident that nearly 80 percent of women prisoners had experienced some form of abuse, either in their childhood or as adults (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Covington & Bloom, 2003).

Pollock (1998) also argued that female offenders have histories of sexual and/or physical abuse that appear to underlie their delinquency, addiction, and criminality. Pollock

(1998) suggested that severe, and/or long-term physical and sexual abuse manifest to delinquency. Gilfus (2011) asserted that due to the earlier traumatic experiences of incarcerated women, survivors of the trauma amongst them resort to risky behaviors. She further alluded to some risky behaviors such as drug use, alcohol, and self-injurious lifestyles as psychological masking, designed to dissociate one's self from the emotional turmoil and pain. The traumatic symptoms are then numbed through the expressed behavior of choice (Briere, 1996; Gilfus, 2011; Herman, 1997). As a result, evidence points to the fact that a number of females incarcerated in the United States have some form of emotional burden that was unresolved prior to incarceration.

2.6 Drugs of choice

To provide an in-depth picture of the entanglement of women in the war on drugs, it is pertinent to understand the drugs of choice commonly associated with imprisoned women prior to their incarceration. In a study with women incarcerated at a correctional center in Oklahoma, (Philips et al., 2000) posited that no category of substance was overwhelmingly associated with incarceration. A state of Utah correctional report pointed to the long held belief of scholars that drug use among imprisoned women prior to incarceration was prevalent. The report found that methamphetamines, or meth, were cited as the number one drug of choice by respondents (48.6%), followed by cocaine (16.5%), marijuana (10.4%), alcohol (9.8%), heroin (7.3%), prescription drugs (6.4%), designer drugs (0.6%), and LSD (0.3%).

The choice of methamphetamines as very popular type of drug among the respondents affirmed that stimulants are the drug of choice among imprisoned women prior to incarceration (Philips. et al. 2000). However, the authors concluded that alcohol was a drug of choice for some but reported that first drug of choice was stimulants followed by marijuana, depressants, and others.

Furthermore, Philips.et al. (2000) alluded that females were more apt than men to have committed crimes in order to obtain money to purchase drugs. They noted that female addicts

would quicker engage in prostitution to support their drug habits. In support of earlier assertions of females' engagement in economic crimes, the report in addition, suggested that it was more common place for women to be involved in property crimes.

2.7 Impact on children/family

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000b) report in 1997, an estimated 65 percent of the women in state prisons and 59 percent of the women in federal prisons had minor children. The report further noted that the number of children with a mother in prison nearly doubled between 1991 and 1999. As result of this trend, in the United States in 1999 alone, there was an estimated 126,000 children whose mothers were incarcerated in various prisons. In a study of female prisoners in California, Owen Bloom (1995) confirmed that 80 percent of the respondents were mothers.

Other studies have alluded to the fact that the majority of the women in the prisons were single mothers who had an average of two children prior to their arrests and had been the custodial parents (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000b; Covington & Bloom, 2003). In corroboration, the Utah Department of Corrections publication, recorded that about 70 percent of women in local jails, 65 percent of women in state prisons, and 59 percent of women in federal prisons have young children.

The increased incarceration rate following the war on drugs has induced collateral damages. Extended separation of an incarcerated mother from her child [ren] is perhaps one of the most harmful features of imprisonment for women (Baunach, 1985; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993) and society at large (Moore & Elkavich, 2008). Often time the difficulties of separation are deepened by a lack of contact due to several extenuating circumstances. Genty (1995) argued that in some cases, the forced separation between parent and child results in permanent termination of the parent-child relationship. Strozier, Armstrong, Skuza, Cecil, & McHale (2011) argued that more often than not, there is a likelihood that the mother is struggling with substance related problems thereby compounding the situation.

Yet other researchers have emphasized the impact of incarceration of mothers on children. Amongst the research based evidence is long-term alienation of affection and distrust that may ensue in adulthood (Frye & Dawe, 2008). In child development outcome, attachment and bonding with primary caregiver have been shown to provide the psychological foundation for a child (Ainsworth, et al. 1978; Bowlby, 1951; Erikson, 1951). Seminal works (Bowlby, 1951; Brazelton, 2000; Erikson, 1951) with children as the focus recognize the importance of caregiver, in this instance; the mother.

There is another angle to the dilemma in the incarceration of women with children. Contained in the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) is a mandate which warrants termination of parental rights of a mother over a child whom had been remanded in foster care for fifteen or more of the preceding twenty-two months. Following this public policy, Jacobs (2001) contended that the majority of incarcerated women serve an average of eighteen months. Jacob (2001) argued female prisoners served longer terms in prison to warrant termination of parental right proceedings. He contended that long prison terms compounded the issue of parental rights for women in prison.

Upon release, women often find themselves grappling with the issue of regaining custody of their children. On the other end of the spectrum, Poehlmann et al. (2008) discovered that most incarcerated mothers were concerned about the quality or stability of care when expressing a preference for children's living arrangements.

To buttress the plight of women, children, and families resulting from incarceration, a study was conducted which delineated the effects of incarceration on families. In the study, *Why Punish the Children? A Reappraisal of the Children of Incarcerated Mothers in America* concluded that 54 percent of children whose mothers were incarcerated never had physical contact with their mothers upon incarceration (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993). This observation was by other studies as well (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Among the several factors attributed to the disconnect is geographical distance from the prison, the prisoner's relationship

with the child's caregiver, elderly caregiver, economic cost, and other extenuating circumstances that present to the prisoner's family during a mother's absence due to (Kappeler & Porter, 2005; Price & Sokoloff, 2004).

In a qualitative study involving incarcerated women, Strozier et al. (2011) painted a picture of hope for the children of incarcerated mothers. They concluded that evidence shows otherwise from what has been the long held view. The long held view is that with the incarceration of a mother, her absence traumatized the children. In discounting the notion, the group contended that a majority of the children whose mothers were in prison are now being cared for by relatives rather than strangers.

Travis & Waul (2003) had argued similarly in their earlier research a positive trend that indicated kinship care during the other's incarceration reduced the level of trauma for the children. In retrospect, this view refutes the assertion made by other studies which suggested that children when their mothers are sent off to prison are traumatized by her absence. According to Mumola (2000), 53 percent of incarcerated mothers noted that during their absence due to incarceration, their children lived with a grandparent. Evidence from the national data showed that the vast majority of these grandparent caregivers are grandmothers (Engstrom, 2008). Poehlmann et al. (2008) indicated that an incarcerated mother worried about the care of their children while incarcerated.

Conclusion

In this chapter the author provided an overview of information in the existing literature on female incarceration in the United States. To accomplish this, the author examined the drug and its impact from a theoretical perspective that included Anomie/strain theory as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. The chapter also has information on the historical background, the statistics, and the reasons why women get involved in the drug culture. Also in the chapter, the author explained the drugs of choice of women who are incarcerated.

Additionally, the chapter included information on impact of incarceration on the families-of-origin of the women prisoners including their children.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes research methods used in the current study. It includes a description of the researcher's role, the population and sample to be included in the study, the sampling procedure to be used, the researcher's role, and the protection of human participants involved in the study. Furthermore, the chapter included the instrument design, the data collection procedure, and data analysis and interpretation methods to be used. The chapter also provided the insight into how the investigator plans to accomplish trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted using the phenomenological approach. This approach has been used effectively in a variety of studies (Creswell, 2003). The phenomenological approach is described by Husserl (1946) as method of exploration that provides rich contextual information. The hallmark of phenomenological research philosophy is to understand the lived experiences of participants (Husserl, 1946). Marshall & Rossman (2006) described phenomenology as "...the study of lived experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop a worldview" (p. 104). Phenomenological research as a procedure also entails engaging subjects in extensive and often prolonged interviews to develop patterns and relationships in order to extract meaning (Creswell, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). It is against this backdrop that the research for this study is designed. Borrowing from the tenets of the phenomenological perspective, the data for this study is collected by way of in-depth face-to-face individual interviews. Each interview was recorded, so as to further review the interview and more importantly, as a way to further conduct analysis of key words from emergent themes and subthemes.

3.2 Population and Sample

This research was restricted to African-American women over the ages of 18 who had been incarcerated for over a six months period at a time in a state or federal prison. Each participant is currently living in the North Texas, Dallas/Fort Worth metropolis. The study consists of data/information from 10 African-American women parents who met the criteria for the study. Participants were volunteers drawn from the community. In order to be included in the study, participants had be (a) African-American woman parent formerly incarcerated and resided in North Texas, (b) served time in United states prison and had child[ren] who experienced her time away from home during incarceration, and (c) had resided in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolis in the last six months.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used in the current study. The justification for the use of purposive sampling in this study is directly related to the small sample size. Purposive sampling is also less capital intensive (Cozby, 2004). Patton (2002) noted that qualitative researchers have the tendency to select each of their cases purposefully. Creswell (2003) contended that "...the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions" (p. 185). Furthermore in qualitative research, "...the logic and power of purposeful sampling... leads to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research..." (Glesne, 2006, p. 34; Patton, 2002, p. 46).

The study relies upon what researchers refer to as snowballing for such small sample size. According to Glesne (2006), it has been used successfully by a number of researchers. Participants were contacted via snowball, which included informal network, flyers, and personal contacts. Glense (2006) argued that snowball selection strategy helps the researcher to gain information of potential cases from people who meet the research interest. Glesne, (2006)

further cautioned that "...snowball sampling is useful for getting started when you have no other way to find the participants that you want, but it is not always a sufficient strategy in itself for participant selection" (p. 35).

Consistent with snowball sampling methodology (Patton, 1990), suggested that participants were asked to identify/contact others who might meet the criteria for the study. Upon acquiring the names and phone numbers of these potential participants, the researcher contacted them through phone calls to discuss the research. Prior to any interviews, participants who volunteered to participate in the study, were sent letters explaining purpose of study, a consent form, and a list of the interview questions.

Since poor sampling can impact credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), the researcher used other strategies such as personal contact to attract a sample with reasonable distinction in phenomenon, settings, or people (Dobbert, 1982; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The personal contact was limited to face-to-face or phone calls to potential participants.

3.4 Researcher's Role

According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is interpretative research whereby the researcher is typically engaged in a protracted and demanding experience with participants. Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000) noted that this introduces a host of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process.

During the researcher's childhood, the researcher experienced firsthand the shortcomings of friends and or family members. Some of their legal problems were tied to substance use among other related crime. As a result of what the researcher experiences drives the research questions in this study. Specifically, there is need to understand, even further, the ramifications of incarceration. Throughout, every effort is made to present the research findings accurately and without bias.

The choice of the target population is solely dependent on the notion that a woman's incarceration affects far more people than her male counterparts. The researcher, therefore, is determined on adding depth to the knowledge that already exists. Despite the fact that the researcher had never been personally incarcerated, some of the notions sound familiar.

3.5 Protection of Human Participants

The study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Texas at Arlington. Prior to conducting the study, approval was also sought from University of Texas at Arlington's Institutional Review Board and Regulatory Services. The researcher provided participants with information about the study and maintained confidentiality of the data collected. Participants were informed of their rights to continue or discontinue participation in the research at any time during the study. Participants were requested to sign a consent form and the researcher asked for each participant's permission to audio tape the interview.

3.6 Instrument Design

A researcher generated interview protocol was used in the study. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions that aimed at evoking participants' perceptions and experiences of the war of drugs and consequent effects on the Africa-American women. Cozby (2004) stated that in using open ended questions "...respondents are free to answer in the way they like" (p. 120). Cozby also noted that open ended questions enable the researcher to distinguish participants' thoughts and their views about their world.

In qualitative research, the research questions guide the interview protocol. Towards this notion, Glesne (2006) emphasized that there should be a relationship between the research and interview questions. Glesne further suggested that "...interview questions tend to be more contextual and specific than research questions" (p. 81). Maxwell (1996) had suggested that the development of interview questions "...requires creativity and insight, rather than a mechanical translation of the research questions into an interview guide" (p. 74).

The following research questions guided the study and the corresponding interview questions were used to collect data for this study:

Table 3.1 Research and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
How did your life change following your encounter with the drug culture?	Describe what life was like for you during your childhood? How did you get involved in the drug culture? What changes did you notice once you became involved in drug culture?
What expectations did you have during court hearings?	What were the charges levied against you? During the court trial what did you expect? What was the outcome of your court trial?
How did you perceive the effect of trauma on your child[ren] during your period of incarceration?	How many children did you have prior to the time of sentencing? How did the experiences of this event impact your child[ren]? During your absence who took care of your child[ren]? Did your child's school or any social agency provide counseling services for her/him following your separation from home?

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Parsons & Brown (2002) emphasized that the sort of data the researcher chooses to collect, as well as the methods used in collecting these data, are affected not only by the nature of the problem but also the awareness and ability of the researcher and the demands and opportunities provided by the situation. However, the information gathered must be as detailed and as informative as possible (Parson & Brown, 2002). In this phenomenological study, the researcher used in-depth interviews, note taking when necessary, and audio taping. Using these methods of data collection permitted the researcher to revisit the data as many times as necessary for detail and clarity.

3.7.1 Interviewing Procedure

In qualitative research, in-depth interviews are widely used (Marshall & Rossman 2006). Marshall and Rossman further argued that in-depth-interviewing are "... more like conversations rather than formal events with predetermined response categories" (p. 101). Additionally, Kahn and Cannel (1957) on the other hand, depicted interviewing as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 149). Moreover Denzin & Lincoln (1998), reported that the use of open-ended interviews and observations compensate one another.

The intent of every well intended researcher is to collect information in structured interviews while attempting to understand and represent the intricate behaviors of members of that society (Creswell, 2003). The aim is to abrogate the imposition of any prior categorization that may curtail the field of inquiry while using semi-and-unstructured interviews (Denzin & Lincoln). In order to prevent any impositions, Creswell (2003) suggested that interviews should have a protocol.

In addition, Creswell asserted that the protocol should include the following components: (a) heading, (b) instructions to the interviewer (opening statements), (c) the key research questions, (d) probes to follow key questions, (e) transition messages for the interviewer, (f) space for recording the interviewer's comments, and (g) space in which the

researcher records the reflective notes. This process allowed the researcher the chance to be in command of the line of questioning (Creswell, 2003).

Rossmann and Marshall emphasized that a research focusing on individual lived experiences characteristically depends on an in-depth interview approach. Dworkin (2005) asserted that in-depth interviewing allows one access to a logical understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, in phenomenological studies, interviews generally involve unstructured and open-ended questions which are intended to extract views and opinions from potential participants (Creswell, 2003).

Glesne (2006) noted that "... interviewing is not quite the same process for all practitioners... derives from who is conducting the interview with whom, on what topic, and at what time and place" (p. 90). In short, interviewing, as noted by Glesne, brings different persons and personalities together. Based on this notion, this researcher interjected ice breakers that were pertinent to the participant's realities. The realities discussed included hobbies, interests, and other life activities. The idea was to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. Based on this premise, the researcher used the rapport established to accomplish in-depth face-to-face interviews and multi session interviews to elude information from the interviewees. Glesne (2006) suggested that "... an hour of steady talk is generally an appropriate length before diminishing returns set in for both parties" (p. 88). Each of the interviews lasted approximately 45minutes of probes and reaffirmations of the responses.

3.7.2 Audio taping

In qualitative research, since interviews can often be demanding (Glesne, 2006), it is best for the interviewer to develop a strategy that assists the researcher during transcription of data. In general principles, taking notes during interviews is problematic. Towards this end, Glesne argued that the practice of taking notes deprives the interviewer the opportunity to note verbal and nonverbal cues from the respondent.

Glesne further emphasized that there are other risk factors associated with note taking such as the interviewee feeling not being noteworthy when the interview stops, or the interviewer struggling to keep pace with what the interviewee says. In order to avoid making such mistakes, the researcher made mental notes, limited writing as much as possible, and clarifying what is written afterwards of the interview process.

Glesne (2006) emphasized that "... the tape recorder, however, provides nearly a complete record of what has been said and permits easy attention to the course of the interview" (p. 89). In support of Glesne's assertion, the researcher audio taped the interview sessions with all the participants. However, verbal permission from the participants was sought prior to audio taping.

Furthermore, the researcher was aware that tape recorders could sometimes become a distraction during the interviewing process. With this notion in mind, the tape recorder that was used to collect data was miniature digital miniature model. Likewise, the researcher was the sole operator of the recorder during all interviews.

In recognition of phenomenology as a research approach and philosophy, the involvement of participants is crucial because participants have to be engaged in the research process as co-learners. However, the extent of the involvement depends on the relationship cultivated during the research process (Glesne, 2006). Towards this notion, the first order of the researcher's tasks was to establish rapport with the potential participants earlier on in the interview process. In this study, the rapport established with the co-learners assisted in the design, redesign, and the interview structure as the interviews proceeded.

According to Dworkin (2005), "... interviews address an individual's subjective experience of a preanalyzed situation in an attempt to draw out his or her definitions of the situation" (p. 183). In this study, as suggested earlier, the researcher began each interview session with an ice breaker in order to create a friendly milieu. Furthermore, the established

rapport provided the ambiance for a meaningful exchange thereby adding to the quality of information from the interviewees.

In so doing, this process provided the grounds to diminish interviewer bias as well as enhance trustworthiness. Also, the researcher used notes and reflexive journals to catalogue dates, potential themes, experiences and conversations that were unrecorded (Dworkin, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), and it also gave the researcher an opportunity to make further improvement with regard to the description, analysis, and interpretations of data.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The practice of data analysis requires one to make sense out of data (Creswell, 2003). Creswell maintained that "... it involves preparing data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data" (p. 190). In phenomenological studies, the practice requires the analysis of important accounts, the construction of meaning units, and the development of a real meaning description (Creswell, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). This is typically achieved through the transcription of interviews, use of field notes, and arranging the data based on the sources of the information (Creswell, 2003).

From their perspectives, Marshall & Rossman (2006) emphasized that the "...process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating" (p. 154). Patton (1990) on the other hand noted that "...the challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (pp. 371-372). Some researchers contend that there is no unique procedure for achieving these tasks (Best & Kahn, 1998; Parsons & Brown, 2002). Wolcott (1994) suggested that description, analysis and interpretation are distinct activities that must not be confused. Wolcott argued that in combination they constitute data transformation in

research. Wolcott also contended that data transformation allows the researcher to move beyond organization of data to meaning. Data transformation is a sequence of steps to be taken instead of one colossal process (Wolcott, 1994).

According to Wolcott (1994) description entails the researcher remaining within the bounds of the data as initially recorded. The process enables the researcher to rely on field notes and transcripts, thereby letting the data “speak for themselves” (p. 10). Since most qualitative researchers recognize that there are strategies to balancing description, analysis, and interpretation, Patton (2002) noted that “...description provides the skeleton frame for analysis that leads to interpretation” (p. 503).

Analysis refers to the identification of key features in the study and the connection between them (Wolcott, 1994). In other words analysis involves pinpointing the vital features and the manner in which the features relate (Wolcott, 1994). Parsons and Brown (2002) stated “...that data analysis involves organizing and synthesizing data, finding patterns or trends in the data, and interpreting those trends” (p. 55).

Wolcott further noted that interpretation takes place when the researcher “...transcends factual data and cautious analysis and begins to probe into what is to be made of them” (p. 36). Patton (2002) highlighted that “...interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order” (p. 480). In the phenomenological approach, interpretation enables the researcher to look for relationships in the phenomena and the experiences of the participants thereby allowing meaning to emerge from the data.

Data transformation in qualitative research is the attempt on the part of researchers to control and make good judgments of their data (Glesne, 2006). Generally, this is the process of transforming data from its original form into what become the findings in the study. Holliday (2002) argued that data transformation involves moving from rationalized segments of

disordered reality to thematic association of data and then to the text of data analysis section or part. For purposes of this study, the researcher used the Giorgi's (1985) Phenomenological Model Analysis. This model allowed the researcher the opportunity to group emergent themes into categories and subcategories.

3.8.1 Coding Scheme

In qualitative studies, researchers used many techniques among which are coding. Coding helps the researcher to make connections of meaning during data transformation. Cozby (2004) defined coding as "...a set of rules used to categorize observations" (p. 368). Glense (2006) asserted that "...coding is a progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data(i.e., observation notes, interview transcripts, memos, documents, and notes from relevant literature) that are applicable to your research purpose" (p. 152). During data transformation, coding is used to help organize, classify, and find themes in the data collected (Glesne, 2006). Nevertheless, Cozby suggested that a researcher should keep coding system as simple as possible. One of the reasons for simplicity is to enable the researcher to categorize subtexts in the experiences as they emerge (Cozby, 2004).

Marshall & Rossman (2006) stated that "...coding is the formal representation of analytical thinking... tough intellectual work of analysis is generating categories and themes" (p. 160). Marshall & Rossman further suggested that coding can take whichever forms among which may include, abbreviations of key words, colored dots, and numbers. However, the mechanics of coding is entirely the choice of the researcher.

In this study the researcher used three forms of coding. The first coding type was the assignment of pseudonyms to the participants to preserve confidentiality and eliminate any identifying information. Secondly the researcher coded all themes emerging from the empirical questions of the different categories of impact of drug war phenomenon. Thirdly the researcher used axial coding for the subcategories. Dworkin (2005) stated that "...axial coding is a more

intense form of coding centered on specific phenomenon or category... identify the properties of the already identified categories, thereby providing more specificity" (p. 185).

Consistent with data transformation in phenomenological methods of qualitative research, the researcher transcribed interviews word-for-word and analyzed the data using key word analysis to derive themes and subthemes. Riessman (1993) suggested the importance of noting significant features such as long pauses and laughter during transcription. During the interpretation phase of data transformation, the researcher incorporated both solicited and the unsolicited statements of the participants to add meaning.

To ensure accuracy, each transcript of an interview was checked and rechecked against the tapes. As suggested by Glesne (2006), notes should be reviewed and tapes should be listened to and transcribed as soon as possible after an interview. This process entailed listening and pausing as the researcher reads to ensure every word is captured. The researcher allowed the next day to perform this exercise to assure the essence of what is said was captured with repeated listening of the recorded interviews.

3.9 Trustworthiness

In order to maintain trustworthiness in qualitative research, there have been several suggestions put forth by several scholars of the qualitative research methods. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) proposed four core questions related to maintaining trustworthiness in conducting a qualitative study. The proposed questions include (a) what do you notice? (b) why do you notice what you notice? (c) how can you interpret what you notice?, and (d) how can you know that your interpretation is the "right" one?

What do you notice? For the purposes of this research, the researcher confirmed all opinions through probes and reaffirmations. In addition, the researcher intentionally and incessantly searched for negative cases during research planning, data collection and data analysis (Glesne, 2006). Any negative cases were eliminated.

Why do you notice what you notice? To further ensure trustworthiness in the study, the researcher used reflexivity to curtail likely subjectivity in relations to what was observed and heard while critically thinking about the research process in its entirety (Glesne, 2006). Furthermore, the researcher maintain awareness by ensuring that what the researcher noticed was not shaped by the setting and participants in their reactions to the researcher. Also, the researcher assumed the status of a learner in order to clarify the researcher biases by detailing personal reactions, checking, rechecking, and cross checking data.

Interpreting what you notice? To control for trustworthiness, the researcher utilized the suggestions made by Lincoln & Guba (1985). According to Lincoln and Guba, prolonged engagement and persistent observation are critical to the credibility of a study. They further argued that "...if prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth" (p. 304).

In support, Creswell (2003) outlined that spending prolonged time in interviews helps the researcher to develop in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being researched and lends credibility to the study. Glesne (2006) also suggested that investing time to conduct in-depth interviews and forging a sound relationship with participants all add to the trustworthiness of data. In this study, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and established rapport with participants. The researcher also used repeat interviews to clarify testimonies and help foster relationships with participants.

Establishing that your interpretation is the "right" one? The researcher sought the opinion of qualitative research experts to provide feedback through periodic meetings to discuss the findings of the study. In phenomenological research, it is not uncommon for the researcher to share the interpretative process with participants as a form of member checking (Glesne, 2006). According to Glesne (2006) when the researcher and the participants share working drafts they "...grow in their interpretations of the phenomenon around them" (p. 167).

Creswell (2003) argued that the use of member checking helps participants to determine if the qualitative findings via final report, specific descriptions, or themes are accurate. Based on this premise, the researcher enlisted the literate participants who critically reviewed the findings of the research and provided feedback. The critical review by the participants served as a guide to the researcher to report the data accurately.

To further buttress this notion, Glesne (2006) argued that when students are working on theses and dissertations, committee members are logical auditors of their work. Also worthy of notation is enlistment of other faculty members who are well versed in the field of qualitative study. Furthermore, the researcher also consulted with recent graduates of the department who in their respective studies employed the qualitative methodology in their research approach for guidance.

In this study, data quality and credibility were similarly ensured through other methods, such as data, and theoretical triangulations and discussion of contrary information on the topic. Marshall & Rossman (2006) defined triangulation as "...the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point" (p. 202). Creswell (2003) suggested the use of "diverse sources of data information by exploring evidence from those sources and utilizing them to build a coherent justification for themes" (p. 196).

Additionally, Marshall and Rossman stated that "... designing a study in which multiple cases, multiple informants, or more than one data-gathering method is used can greatly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings" (p. 202). Based on the assertion, the researcher used triangulation to add to the richness of what knowledge currently exists on this phenomenon in addition to divergent information gathered from participants.

According to Rossman and Wilson (1994), the use of data from varied sources can be used to confirm, elaborate, or clarify the study. Furthermore, some qualitative researchers have noted that in order to increase confidence in qualitative research findings, the incorporation of multiple kinds of data sources such as multiple investigators, and multiple theoretical

perspectives may seem very logical (Denzin 1989; Glesne, 2006). In order to accomplish this, the researcher used participants with varied backgrounds and experiences who may have prison experiences due to drug culture.

Furthermore, the research drew on different theoretical perspectives to augment an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. The theoretical perspectives solely rested on the anomie/strain theories. However, the researchers augmented with other theories where necessary. Lastly, the ecological perspective was used to account for the ramifications of the war on drugs in regards to African-American women and familial/societal impact.

Theoretical triangulation was used to present a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the research. To further bolster the understanding of the study, the researcher drew from a pool of existing literature on different variables pertaining to the implications of the law enforcement war on drugs on African-American women. According to Creswell (2003) to add to the depth of trustworthiness in qualitative research, it is always beneficial to present contrary views to the themes. Creswell further stated that different perspectives help to enrich the credibility of the study. To accomplish this, the researcher included all differing accounts of data from the potential participants. These differing opinions provided a broader horizon and enriched the findings of the research.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the researcher design, the population and sample, the researcher's role, protection of human participants, instrument design, data collection procedure, data analysis and interpretation, and controlling for reliability. Also in this chapter, the researcher discussed how the interview questions were derived and how the interviews were administered. Nonetheless, trustworthiness a prime role of the researcher was ensured through transparency of methods, detailed data transformation, and triangulation. Furthermore, the researcher outlined the plan to uphold the ethics of research by maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of African-American women who have been impacted by incarceration based on drug offense. A phenomenological approach was employed to gain knowledge into what contributes to understanding the implications of the war on drugs on women. The study specifically explored the perceptions of African-American women on the impact of war on drugs on women of African-American origin. According to Creswell (2003), "... certain types of research problems call for specific approaches" (p. 21). A phenomenological approach is appropriate due to the exploratory nature of this study and the need for an in-depth understanding of African-American women's perceptions regarding the impact of the law enforcement war on drugs. The aim of the study was to use the perceptions of African- American women to add breadth, depth, and broaden discussions on the issue of female incarcerations to the already existing knowledge. Ten African-American women were interviewed in a semi-structured interview format. The current chapter concisely describes the ten participants, describes the process of analyses, and presents the emergent themes.

4.1 Sample Description

All participants were African-American who had experienced incarceration due to the drug culture. All participants lived in the Dallas Fort Worth area and have over six months of residency in the community. Each of the participants understood and spoke English fluently. These were the established criteria for inclusion in the study.

There were a total of 10 African-American in the study. These women had children totaling seventeen in number. Amongst the women interviewed for this study 60 percent completed high school while the other 40 had some college.

4.2 Data Collection Process

There were 10 participants in this study. Data collection was accomplished by the researcher through in-depth face-to-face interviews. Each participant responded to a set of open-ended questions from the researcher. Additionally, the participant and the researcher conducted all the interviews at a format and time agreed to by the participant and the researcher. All interviews were conducted in the participants' homes.

Furthermore, all interviews were audio taped with the consent of each participant. The researcher ensured that each participant understood the reasons for audio taping the interview sessions. The reasons were specified in the consent form. The researcher used a hand-held digital voice recorder with a capability of storing hours of recording in separate folders for each participant. The conversations were then downloaded to the computer. All the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes on average. In addition, the researcher maintained field notes to capture other unsolicited comments from the participants as well as key features of the discussions.

Rapport is an essential aspect of data extraction and collection from participants (Glesne, 2006). The establishment of rapport was of utmost importance to the researcher as a co-learner. Therefore, the researcher before interviews talked with the interviewees in general about anything that was of interest to them. In the same breath, the researcher was cautious not to personalize the interviews in too great a degree because of the touchy nature of the topic covered in the interview. During these conversations, the researcher always gauged the body cue of the participant in order to change subjects if the participant appeared uncomfortable. At the end of the conversation, the participant was usually comfortable with the data collection process, and was set for the commencement of the interview due to the rapport established.

Furthermore, the rapport established by the researcher allowed the researcher to obtain demographic information as well. The demographic information provided the researcher vital

information that was used to describe individual participants without compromising their identities.

4.3 Methods of Analysis

The analysis took place in different phases. The first phase entailed the analysis of the demographic information which the participants had completed during the face-to-face interviews. The demographic information sheet allowed the researcher to analyze relevant information of the participants in ways that added richness to the research. The analyzed information is arranged in different combinations.

All interviews with participants were face-to-face and audio taped. The reasons for audio taping the interviews were (1) to minimize any loss of data, (2) to capture all that was said, and (3) to aid verification of data during data analysis. In accordance, all interviews were transcribed word-for-word. In the current study, upon completing the analysis of the demographic information, the researcher then began the second process of analysis by meticulously reading the transcription notes of all interviews while documenting a common premise of all responses. During the interview of the participants, the researcher posed open-ended questions and noticed there were commonalities that emerged in their responses as the interviews proceeded.

The researcher used the open coding system to further identify and label the themes from the carefully read transcripts. These emergent themes were grouped side by side to prevent an overlap in their categorization. Using axial coding, (Dworkin, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Pitney & Parker, 2002) the researcher further identified the subcategories. During this initial data analysis, the researcher identified three categories. The researcher then enlisted the help of two readers to clarify the categories that were identified by the researcher if they addressed the empirical questions, and to further reduce the categories to a manageable number (Packer-Muti, 2009). After much consideration, the readers' inputs were used to make

further modifications. Afterwards, the research questions that guided the study and the themes were grouped and coded.

In phenomenological studies “there is more than one legitimate way to proceed with a phenomenological investigation” (Streubert& Carpenter, 1999, p. 48). Faced with the dilemma of identifying the categories and subcategories, the researcher used the Giorgi’s model of phenomenological analysis (1985) to compress the data while retaining the crux of understanding of participants’ experiences or phenomena. The phenomenological model proposed by Giorgi (1985) recommended steps to condense the data during analysis.

In the current study, the researcher used Giorgi’s model to make data manageable and to establish the relationship between the categories and subcategories of the emergent themes. Further, the application of the model aided the researcher to identify three key components related to the empirical questions. The three key components are central to the impact of war on drug on the African-American women. Since no research had previously looked at the African-American women’ perceptions of the war on drugs phenomena, the model allowed analysis in a holistic premise to include categories of (1) Life Changes (2) Drug Culture/Incarceration, and(3), Family Separation. The categories were further divided into subcategories, paired with the emergent themes, and analyzed. The analysis is on African-American women’s perceptions of the impact of war on drug.

Below in Table 1 is an outline of the three categories that were identified along with the subcategories and corresponding themes. The generated themes emerged from the data analysis of the interview transcriptions and field notes of the participants’ interviews. These subdivisions were derived in the course of analysis of the raw data from the African-American women’s interviews.

The research questions that guided the study are:

1. How did your life change following your encounter with the drug culture?
2. What expectations did you have during court hearings?

3. How did you perceive the effect of trauma on your child[ren] during your period of incarceration?

Table 4.1 Categories, Subcategories, and Emergent Themes Based on Giorgi's (1985) Phenomenological Analysis (n=10)

Categories and Subcategories	Emergent Themes
Life Changes	
Drug introduction	Quality childhood Peer pressure
Drug Culture/Incarceration	
Court Outcomes	Leniency Associated crime
Family separation	
Reality Check	Regret Kinship/Natural Support Lack of therapeutic intervention

Comments: The categories, subcategories and themes reflect the relationship between the variables.

4.4 Generated Themes

As stated above the generated themes were categorized using the Giorgi phenomenological model. The idea was to reduce the data while presenting a holistic view of the empirical questions. In addition, the categorization provided an overall fit and match with the research questions. Furthermore, the model provided a timeline. The timeline described the women's childhood, introduction to the drug culture, incarceration, and their children's lives left

behind due to encounter with drug culture and consequent incarceration. Below are the analyses of the different categories and themes generated from the research questions.

4.4.1 Category: Life Changes

The Life changes category examined what family life was like for the African-American women during their childhood and their children before the war. In broader terms, this category examined the women's notions on how each of them had become involved with the drug culture. Furthermore, the notion was first to gain insight to the women's childhood about a possible trigger during this developmental stage that led to later drug culture. To determine that the study used the empirical question listed below to investigate. The question is as follows:

How did your life change following your encounter with the drug culture?

4.4.1.1 Subcategory: Drug Introduction

Under this subcategory, there were two themes that emerged. This subcategory is contained in the category within which African-American women's early life and introduction to drugs was examined.

Quality childhood: All of the women ($n=9$) noted that prior to getting involved in the drug culture they had a measurably good quality childhood. Each of the women recounted a childhood that was fulfilling and memorable. In support of their claim, some of the women's descriptions and accounts of childhood prior to their experiences with drug culture are chronicled below:

P1: Okay

P2: A lot of fantasies world [sic]

P4: My life was great [sic]

P6: Happy, loving and care [sic]

P8: It was good [sic]

Peer pressure: This theme emerged when the African-American women in the study were asked how they first became involved with the drug culture. Responses of some of the participants demonstrate below the reasons for their involvement in the drug culture.

P1: Peer pressure

P2: Wanting to be accepted [sic]

P3: Saw other family members [sic]

P4: I walked into it [sic]

P6: Peer pressure

P8: Curiosity [sic]

4.4.2 Category: Drug Culture/Incarceration

The Drug culture/Incarceration category examined what transpired upon entering the drug capture. Among the African-American women interviewed for the study, this category revealed their expectations from the point when they encountered the law enforcement regarding their drug use. The idea was to get a sense of the African-American women's perceptions in understanding their charges, court proceedings, and how the court system worked or did not work in their favors. To make the determination on the consequences of drug culture of these African-American women the question below was asked:

What expectations did you have during court hearings?

4.4.2.1 Subcategory: Court Outcomes

In this category, the major subcategory indicated that there was family separation there were two themes that emerged based on the responses that the participants provided. The subcategory investigated the punishment that was meted out by the courts to the women upon apprehension. Some of the responses are delineated below:

Leniency: This theme emerged when the respondents were asked their expectation following their arrest and the court dispositions of their cases in regards to their crimes. The women in the study were of the notion they were going to receive minimal and expected

lesser punishment than they were handed down by the courts. Below are some of the testimonies:

P1: Minimum sentence [sic]

P3: You did not expect to take 2 years in jail [sic]

P4: Consequences [whatever that was]

P6: To get the lowest sentence that I could [sic]

P7: I expected to get off or less as possible [sic]

P8: I should have rehab for substance abuse [sic]

P9: I expected to be free

Associated crime: The African-American women in the study admitted their guilt of crimes involving a drug use as well as an accompanying or associated crime. The theme emerged when nearly all participants noted their arrest stemmed from another crime. The evidence of associated crimes including the drug culture is outlined below.

P1: Theft, aggravated assault

P2: Theft/Shoplifting/use

P3: Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

P4: Robbery by threat [sic]

P6: Aggravated robbery

P8: Fraud/use

4.4.3 Category: Family separation

The Family separation category examined the effect women's separation had on the children and the extended family. Under this category, there emerged a subcategory and three themes. The category also sought to determine not only the aforementioned impact of the children left behind but the extent of intervention that was provided by outside agencies. This category examined the women's notions on how each of the women viewed what was happening to their respective families due to their involvement with the drug culture. Based on

the views of the women interviewed for the study, there emerged a subcategory as well other themes. The empirical question leading up to those themes is as follows:

How did you perceive the effect of trauma on your child[ren] during your period of incarceration?

4.4.3.1 Subcategory: Reality Check

On the responses of the participants, this subcategory featured prominently in what was stated by the respondents. The women in the study inferred that upon learning of their punishments, realized that they were not only separating from their children but creating a vacuum in their responsibilities of emotional support to those they were leaving behind. Furthermore, the African-American women in the study became aware that they were leaving their families behind for a good while. Additionally, this realization proved to be a reality check for the women. Following the subcategory, other themes emerged as well. The themes are explained below as follows:

Regret. The women became aware of their children growing up without them, their inability to be a parent and a number of other familial precious moments that was to elude them while incarcerated. In addition, the women while incarcerated had time to reflect on their disservice to their various families. Some children of these African-American women in this study who were incarcerated had educational, psychological, and other behavioral problems that emanated due to their absences. Supporting comments from the respondents are listed below as follows:

P2: I was devastated

P3: My child broke into homes, were very bad [sic]

P4: Devastation [sic]

P6: Daughter start acting out, she was failing [sic]

P8: My child affected right now because of that, she in jail now [sic]

P9: They were affected bad, it hurt they started acting out [sic]

Kinship/Natural support: This theme emerged when the participants were asked who took care of their children while they were incarcerated. All the women ($n=10$) in the study noted that their children had been left in the care of their kin or natural support. The comments of participants in support of the use of kinship and natural support are listed below as follows:

P1: My mother

P2: Her grandmother

P4: Friends and family [sic]

P6: Grandparents

P7: My aunt

P9: Their dad and aunt

P3: My family

Lack of therapeutic intervention: This theme emerged when the African-American women were asked if therapeutic intervention was made available to their children while they were incarcerated. All but one ($n=9$) said her child was exposed to therapy. Obviously the children did not receive any form of intervention to deal with the circumstances that had befallen them following separation from their emotional base due to incarceration of their mothers. To ascertain, some of their claims are listed below as follows:

P1: No

P3: No

P4: Yes, since she was 13

P6: No

P7: No

P8: No

4.5 Summary

The sample of the current study consisted of 10 African-American women who have been incarcerated due to their involvement with drug culture. These African-American women

reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolis area. All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured face-to-face format. The average run time of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes. In addition, all interviews were audio taped and transcribed word-for-word.

The analyses of the transcribed notes occurred in different phases with the support of two readers. The analysis was conducted with the aid of Giorgi's phenomenological analysis model, which provided a more holistic view of the phenomena while retaining the crux of understanding. The implications of the current study will be discussed in Chapter V with preceding studies to support the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore African-American women perceptions on the impact of war on the war on drugs, based upon their experiences in prison. There were 10 African-American women in the sample; of which there were a total of 17 children. The educational background of the parents ranged from high school completion to some college. Six of the African-American women/ parents (60%) earned high school diplomas, four parents (40%) had some years of college educations. Each participant rendered her perceptions and beliefs on the impact of war of on drugs phenomenon on the African-American women and their children in regards to incarceration.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of the current study was to African-American women's perceptions on the impact of the war on drugs by the law enforcement. The war on drugs policy was first introduced by the Nixon administration in 1972(Covington & Bloom, 2003; Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Sudbury, 2004).At the time of the policy, the incarceration rate for African-American women was inconsequential (Moore &Elkavich, 2008). Following the changes in the policies by different administrations and Congress, the laws became stringent and provided the law enforcement a new mandate for more arrests and convictions. As a result, this new mandate produced the highest incarceration rates witnessed by minority women and specifically African-Americans (Roberts, 1991; Tonry, 1995). Against this backdrop, some studies have alluded to the growing concern that women of color and minority women are more likely to be arrested or jailed for any breeches or violations of the law by enforcement agencies (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000a; Covington & Bloom, 2003). This in turn has fueled the increased numbers of women especially the African-American women who are in state and local jails.

The discussion that follows is in keeping with the research questions that guided the study.

1. How did your life change following your encounter with the drug culture?

The parents' narratives revealed that prior to their involvement with drugs, they enjoyed a cherished moments in their childhood. Nearly all the African-American women ($n=9$) in the study emphasized that they enjoyed their lives until they began to experiment with drugs. According to these African-American women, life changed once they began to use drugs. In posing this empirical question, the study found that the life changes suffered by the African-American women in the study were not only interpersonal but intra personal struggles over using drugs and lacking the ability to exercise any psychological control over their persons until they encountered law enforcement. This actually corroborates the notion that females engaged in the drug culture are in it due to internal emotional struggles (Jang & Johnson, 2005). In support of this notion, one participant expressed "It wasn't good, I was adopted" (P 9).

This inference was best expressed through the words of some of the participants in reference to the life that evolved after getting involved in the drug culture:

P 1. "Drastically [sic]

P 6. "It changed for the worst [sic].

P 9. "It changed dramatically [sic]

In all, the African-American women in the study acknowledged that life was no longer what it was prior to making drugs part of their daily routine. Some of them acknowledged that if they had to do it again it will not be a life choice they will ever make.

2. What expectations did you have during court hearings?

The African-American women in the study based on their responses did not fully understand the gravity of their offenses. Given the expectations, these women in the study, based on their responses were not aware of the policy changes on drug war at the time of their arrests. Indications are that they were oblivious of the implications of the law on their persons as

well as their families once they became drawn into the drug culture. Until their encounter with the law enforcement, these women due to their drug culture probably lost their faculties and better judgment at the time. Another likely suggestion is that the women in the study lacked the proper educational background to fully comprehend their plight. This assertion substantiates the notation made on education of incarcerated women (Virgil, 2003). Research has shown that majority of the women in the prisons are not nearly as educated. As a result of inadequate understanding, majority of the respondents were unaware of what was going on while their trial took place. However, their expectations suggested apathy partly due to ignorance of the law and lack of knowledge of what penalties were associated with their offenses.

To corroborate this notion, one of the participants stated that her expectation was to receive “Minimum sentence” (P1). To further delineate the expectations of these African-American women in regards to their offenses, another participant noted “I expected to be free” (P 9). Yet another expected to be sent to drug rehabilitation facilities further denoting the women’s disconnect from the realities of the political climate that demanded the changes in the penal codes.

An African-American woman in the study in describing her expectation argued:

P 3. ‘I did not expect anything, probation maybe [sic].’

3. How did you perceive the effect of trauma on your child [ren] during your period of incarceration?

These African-American women in the study noted that they knew they had subjected their children to trauma following their forced separation. Based on the accounts of these women in the study, they came to the realization once they had time to reflect, and then they were forced to face their new realities. Each participant ($n=10$) in the study realized that their time away from the children brought upon them other unimagined consequences. Evidence suggests that when a woman leaves children behind for a protracted time due to incarceration, chances are that the children themselves become delinquent. To corroborate this claim, one

participant stated “They were affected bad, it hurt they started acting out [sic]” (P 9). Another participant had this to say “My child affected right now because of that, she in jail now” [sic] (P 8). Yet another participant in describing the trauma caused by her separation from her child and the consequences brought upon the child due to her absence emphasized “My child broke into homes, were very bad [sic] (P 3). Furthermore, as much as the parents wanted to believe that their children were resilient and did not exhibit trauma symptoms, previous studies have shown otherwise. Childhood trauma manifest in several ways at different times during the lifespan (Bremner, 1999; Heim, et al. 2001; Thabet, Tawahina, El Sarraj, & Vostanis, 2008; Walton, Nuttall & Nuttall, 1997).

Parents interviewed in the present study indicated that the trauma experienced by their children went untreated. In addition, the parents ($n=9$) emphasized that their children were not offered any therapeutic interventions by their home schools to cope with their protracted absences from home. The only child who received psychological intervention had been in the treatment prior to mother’s incarceration. Studies have shown that when children feel the effects of trauma without proper intervention such an environment does not augur well for growth including scholastic endeavors (Gabardine, Kostelny, & Dulbrow, 1996; Wessels & Green, 1997).

5.2 Analysis of Subthemes

During the analysis of data, several subthemes emerged. The subthemes seemed to revolve around how some African-American women described their lives as changing once they became embroiled in the drug culture and consequently law enforcement. The subthemes were described as recklessness and addiction.

5.2.1 Recklessness

The African-American women in the study inferred recklessness in lifestyle when they narrated their experiences prior to being incarcerated and during court trials. The women had knowledge that something was wrong with their actions and behaviors. However, they sought no professional help. From all indications the lifestyle these women in the study led was one of

recklessness to the point of encounter with the law enforcement. Some of the women described their lifestyles and experiences as follows:

P6: I start lying to my family and self [sic]

P8: I was uncomfortable [sic]

P7: I start doing things that I normally would not do [sic].

5.2.2 Lack of Intervention for Children

During the interview, there were indications that the women's addictions mattered to them more than anything in the world. These African-American women indicated that their lives revolved around drugs. However, the impact of their crimes was felt more by the children. The women in the study ($n=10$) indicated no professional help was available to their children during the absences from home.

5.3 Conclusions

The basis for this study was to gain insight into the perceptions of African-American women in regards to the law enforcement war on drugs. Gaining insight into such phenomenon required the narratives of African-American women themselves. Based on these narratives and other findings in current investigation, the conclusions reached included the following:

1. Prior to being incarcerated, African-American women enjoyed a certain quality of life that was amiable and cherished.
2. The onset of the encounter with drug culture not only changed the lives of the women but everyone around them. Incarceration changed family dynamics.
3. Based on the women's respective encounter, the narratives show that these African-American women lacked the sophistication to fully navigate and comprehend the court system. A number of the women believed that their crimes were not serious enough to warrant prison terms or as long as some of them received.
4. Despite being in prison, kinship meant a lot to these women. Due to the kinship that exists within the African-American community, the children left behind did not go off to

foster homes or other children homes. All the children remained within the family with some family member.

5. A number of the participants reinforced what research had stated about offending parents. Some of the children developed behavior issues with their mothers missing in their lives.

6. Also that they children left behind received any psychological intervention to deal with their loss at home. There was no intervention from the state or other social welfare agencies. Psychological intervention was far fetched for the children left behind.

5.4 Limitations

1. The participants were recruited from the North Texas region and resided mainly in cities of Dallas and Fort Worth.
2. All the female participants came from the same county.
3. There was an uneven distribution of participants across age line. A greater number of the participants fell between the ages of 36-45 yrs of age. On that notion, the results reflect more of those participants between those ages.
4. Some participants were not included in the study due to their limitations in English language proficiency.

5.5 Implications of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore African –American women’s perceptions of the war on drugs by law enforcement. A growing body of literature exists on the impact of the war on drugs on women. However, enough has not been documented on African-American women’s perceptions. Given this, it is pertinent that policy makers, criminal justice/criminology professionals, social work, and other professionals in the fields of early childhood and child development workers understand the ramifications of the war on the drugs from the African-American women’s perspectives. In so doing, policy makers and professionals need to be better equipped to assist or work with families when a woman is sent to prison. As the present

research has shown, when a woman is incarcerated due to the war on drugs, resources need to be put in place to help those left behind especially children and the grandparents left in charge of them cope. Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher has put forth recommendations to school systems and social service organizations. The recommendations towards action are follows:

5.5.1 Implications

The following provides implications for professionals, schools, governments and other stakeholders who might be concerned with the incarceration of women with children. Incarceration presents not only challenges to the woman incarcerated but children and other family members left behind. Correcting the deficits in the experiences of families requires calculated steps by all parties and stakeholder.

5.5.2 School Systems

Previous studies have shown that trauma has adverse effects on child development domains (Jawad, Sibai, & Chayaa, 2009; Sadeh, Hen-Gal, & Tikotzky, 2008; Thabet, Tawahina, El Sarraj, Vostanis, 2008). Those domains include but are not limited to attachment, cognitive, emotional physical and possibly language development in children. Research shows that no child who experienced trauma of any sorts escaped unscathed by the psychological effects of war (Ursano & Shaw, 2007).

The current study has found that, as reported by the African-American parents in the current study, the children lacked clinical interventions on trauma following incarceration of their mothers as a direct result of war on drugs. Both the national and local governments lacked the ability to provide such services. Therefore, as a priority, school systems need to incorporate in their curriculum therapeutic interventions for children whom the mother were forcibly taken to prison for a protracted time due drug culture. Schools' officials need to provide debriefing for children whom have experienced trauma. Research shows that traumatized child have a hard time concentrating and developing cognitively (Garbarino, 1991).

Given this assertion, the school systems need to work in tandem with the law enforcement when a woman with children of school age is arrested. Once children are identified, clinical intervention needs to be provided to support the child in school. The clinical intervention needs to be a coping mechanism for the child [ren] to proceed through the grieving process with the least harm in their personality in the future. In providing interventions of any sorts, there are advantages associated with taking into account the cultural needs as well as incorporating cultural elements of the population in to therapy. The incorporation of cultural needs and cultural fundamentals of the group must reflect desired needs of the target populations. In addition, the school systems need to provide training modules to personnel on working specifically with children and their families who have experienced trauma. Any offered therapeutic intervention must include cultural competence and best practices from the perspectives of the target populations in order to achieve desired results.

5.5.3 Social Service Agencies

The current study showed that social service agencies could play a vital role in identifying families where separations have occurred due to a mother's incarceration. If these agencies worked closely with other agencies such as the law enforcement or the schools in terms of reporting separation issues faced by families due to separation caused by parental separation could be alleviated. The current study found that some parents and their children did not receive help from these organizations through out the period of a mother's incarceration. Social service agencies need to work with the courts to identify cases where mothers of children are involved and provided clinical interventions and other needs. Research has shown that if a parent is delinquent chances are the offspring will emulate. In order to curb this cycle intervention will provide an upfront societal financial cost as opposed to a backend psychosocial and financial cost.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

There is a growing body of literature on the impact of war on drugs on women and children, and families. However, there is need to explore specific issues within this phenomenon why clinical interventions are not being funded targeting children of imprisoned mothers. Such issues need to be incorporated in policy literature to bring exposure to consumers. There is also the need for researchers to inculcate into the arena of study the need for policy on mandatory training, education and trades skills knowledge for imprisoned women. Without such an established order African-American women may continue to face issues with drug culture and encounters with law enforcement.

5.7 Summary

The current study was an attempt to explicate the views of African American women on their perceptions on how the war on drugs by the law enforcement. The preceding chapters have highlighted the purpose of the study, the rationale of the study, a review of prior literature, the methodology that included the data collection procedure, the data analysis, the results of the study, the conclusions of the study, and implications of the study as well as recommendations for future research. The incarceration of women has been a recent phenomenon in the last twenty years. It was introduced as a policy to curb drug culture but through revisions into law, it caused more unintended collateral damages especially to the African-American women. However, the reverberations of its effects have more lasting impact on the family especially the children than it does accomplish anything. Other researches have shown that the war on drug by the law enforcement affects children, other family members, and taxpayers disproportionately. Perhaps, policy makers may need to revisit the drug war law through assessment and evaluations in order to ameliorate the unintended consequences.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INVITATION

Letter of Invitation

Researcher:

Zandra D. Hubbard, B.A.
817 XXX XXXX

Advisor:

Sara J. Philips, J.D., M.A.
817 272 3818

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Zandra D. Hubbard, and I am a candidate for a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice/Criminology at the University of Texas in Arlington, Texas. I am interested in understanding African-American women's views regarding how the war on drugs impacted them and their children while they were incarcerated. The purpose of this study will be to explore the perceptions of African-American women who have been impacted by incarceration based on the law enforcement efforts on the war on drugs. The aim of the study will be to use the perceptions of African-American women to add breadth, depth, and broaden discussions on the issue of female incarceration to the already existing knowledge.

According to published reviews and studies, the incarceration rate for women has been on the increase in the last twenty years. Overall prison population showed that from 1985 to 1995 there was an increase from 265,010 to 509,828 an estimated 192 percent. In 1985 women formed 8 percent or 19,077 inmates of the jail population. By 2003 there has been an estimated 888 percentage increase in women in the overall prison population. However, there has been no research done on this phenomenon from the perspectives of African-American women on their plight while they have re-entered the community. In conducting this research, you will be asked some questions that will pertain to your experiences while incarcerated and about the children you left behind. The interview will be audio taped and will last between 60 to 90mins. The tapes will be transcribed and analyzed. All data collected including tapes and transcripts will be assigned code numbers and stored in a locked file cabinet in the Department of Criminal Justice/Criminology at UTA, University Hall for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. It is important to note that only if you have signed a consent form will you be included in the study.

There will be complete protection of confidentiality of the audiotapes as well as the transcripts. Their contents will only be used for purposes of the study and research publication. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. There are two direct benefits to your participation in this study. The first is that at the end of the interview, you will receive a Wal-Mart \$20 gift certificate. The second is at the completion of the study, a summary of the results will be mailed to you upon request.

If you chose to participate in this study, in order to ensure protection of your identity, please sign and bring with you a signed copy of the "Consent to Participate in Research" form to the researcher during our scheduled interview. The first copy is for the researcher and the second is for you to keep. Please note that only if you meet the eligibility criteria will you be accepted to participate in the study. Thank you for the opportunity.

Sincerely,

Zandra D. Hubbard, B.A.
Principal Researcher

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT FLYER

Recruitment Flyer

The Impact of the War on Drugs: African American Women's Perceptions Through a Phenomenological Approach.

A graduate student from University of Texas at Arlington is seeking women who have been incarcerated to participate in a study. The purpose of this study is to explore women's experiences in drug involvement and consequent incarceration. This study is part of a requirement for the completion of a master's program in Criminology/Criminal Justice at University of Texas at Arlington.

To participate in this study:

- You must be over 18 years of age.
- You participated in drug culture leading to prison time.
- You are an African American woman.
- You were incarcerated in a prison within the United States.
- While incarcerated you had a child [ren] over the age of seven.

Participation will be voluntary, confidential, and requires a face-to-face interview that will be audio-taped. Each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. At the end of the interview participants will receive a \$20 Wal-Mart gift certificate.

If you are interested in participating, please contact
Zandra D. Hubbard

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Demographic Information Form

Participant Identification Number: _____
(To be assigned by the researcher)

Date _____
Participant's Name (First name, Last name)

Participant's Age: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56+ _____

Type of drug offense committed [1. use, 2. distribution, and, 3. sell] _____

Court disposition [imprisonment and probation, imprisonment and parole, imprisonment and mandatory drug rehabilitation, felony, misdemeanor] _____

Length of stay in prison [1. 1-5 years, 2. 6-10 years, 3. 11-15 years, 4. 16-20 years, 5. 21 years +] _____

Location of prison (Texas, other) _____

Highest level of education attained [HS, Some college, 4yrs, 4yrs+] _____

Marital status at time of incarceration [single, married, divorced, widowed] _____
Number of Children [1, 2, 3, 4+] _____

Age of child(ren) during incarceration [7-12years, 13-17years] _____

Child(ren)'s grade level during incarceration [1st-6th, 7th-12th Grades] _____

Child(ren)'s health status during incarceration (Good, Fair, Bad) _____

Caretaker arrangement (grandparents, extended family, fostercare) _____

Other Information: _____

APPENDIX D

REFERRAL LIST FOR COUNSELING SERVICES

Referral List for Counseling Services

Catholic Charities & Diocese of Fort Worth
Clinical Counseling Program
Main Fort Worth Campus
249 West Thornhill Dr
Fort Worth, TX. 76115
Tel. [817] 534. 0814
Fax [817] 536. 1556
Web: www.ccdofw.org
Contact Person: Dena Hart.

MHMR of Tarrant County [Mental Health Mental Retardation]
1501 East El Paso
Fort Worth, TX. 76102
Tel. [817] 569. 4600
Fax [817] 569. 4698
Web: www.mhmrtc.org

Potter's House
6777 W. Kiest Blvd
Dallas, TX. 75236-3006
Tel. 1 800 BISHOP2
Web: custservice@tdjakes.org

Texas Social Services
3530 Forest Lane Ste. 312-B
Dallas, TX. 75234
Tel. [972] 838. 5798
Fax [214] 722. 2240
Contact Person: Tom Buchanan
Web: <http://www.texassocialservices.org>

The organizations listed above will assist women who have been incarcerated and need services on life challenges resulting from reentry adjustments. These agencies provide targeted case management which includes counseling services amongst other services. For further information and assistance contact any of the above mentioned organization.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Zandra D. Hubbard graduated from Texas Wesleyan University with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice in 2008/9. She enrolled at the University of Texas at Arlington's Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology in the fall semester of the same year. Ms. Hubbard interests are working with youth and families of women in the Dallas/Fort Worth area who have been incarcerated. Ms. Hubbard has seven years of experience working in the legal field as a paralegal. She also has worked professionally in various capacities in social services agencies helping families. Ms. Hubbard plans to further her professional career as a criminal defense attorney.