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**IDENTIFYING AS A TROUBLEMAKER/PARTIER: THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL
INCARCERATION AND EMOTIONAL INDEPENDENCE**

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ABSTRACT**Objectives:**

Researchers have found that experiencing parental incarceration has long-term consequences for children, such as involvement in crime. However, few studies have examined how parental incarceration influences identity endorsement. Given that self-identities influence behavior, including criminal activity, understanding precursors of self-identities is important. In the current paper, we examined the association between parental incarceration and young adult children's deviant self-identities. Furthermore, we explored how this association varied by emotional independence, or freedom from the excessive need for parental approval.

Methods:

We analyzed data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS) ($n = 1,321$), a sample of men and women interviewed five times over a period of ten years (2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2011), and publically available official incarceration records.

Results:

Parental incarceration was positively associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier during young adulthood, but only among those with low emotional independence (i.e., for whom gaining parental approval was very important) ($p < .05$). That is, parental incarceration was inconsequential for young adults' identifying as troublemakers/partiers among those with high emotional independence.

Conclusions:

These findings suggest that the development of high emotional independence, or values, beliefs, and identities in contrast to an incarcerated parent, may attenuate the intergenerational transmission of antisocial identities and behavior.

In the United States, the incarcerated population has increased substantially over the past several decades (Carson & Anderson, 2016). Moreover, the number of children whose parent(s) have been incarcerated has increased from 945,600 in 1991 to over 1.7 million in 2007, which was an increase of over 80% (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Estimates suggest that upwards of 8 million children have experienced parental incarceration (Haskins, Amorim, & Mingo, 2018; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2018). Importantly, the consequences associated with parental incarceration are negative and wide-ranging (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014).

Experiencing the incarceration of a parent is associated with children's and adolescents' learning disabilities and developmental delays (Turney, 2014), depression (Swisher & Roettger, 2012), trauma symptoms (Arditti & Salva, 2015; Bocknek, Sanderson, & Britner, 2009), lower grade point averages (Hagan & Foster, 2012), and delinquency (Dallaire, Zeman, & Thrash, 2015; Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher, & Mincy, 2012). The deleterious consequences of parental incarceration also continue into adulthood (Forster, Davis, Schlafer, & Unger, 2019). For example, parental incarceration is associated with young adults' lower educational attainment (Hagan & Foster, 2012), poorer physical/mental health (Lee, Fang, & Luo, 2013), and involvement in criminal activities and contact with the criminal justice system (Besemer, Van der Geest, Murray, Bijleveld, & Farrington, 2011; Murray, Bijleveld, Farrington, & Loeber, 2014).

Parental incarceration may also affect individuals' self-identities. Self-identities encompass the content of and provide organization to the self-concept (e.g., Gecas & Burke, 1995; Rosenberg, 1981; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity exploration and, ultimately, committing to an identity are critical aspects of adolescents' (Rosenberg, 1981) and emerging adults' (Arnett, 2000) development. As Murray, Loeber, and Pardini (2012, p. 284) posited, "social expectations about children with incarcerated parents might cause children to adopt a 'delinquent identity.'" This is plausible because individuals internalize how they think significant others view them, which scholars have termed "reflected appraisals" (Matsueda, 1992).

Indeed, research has long documented that individuals adjust their self-identities to conform to the informal labels and social expectations that others have imposed on them (e.g., Asencio & Burke, 2011; Brownfield & Thompson, 2008). In particular, parents/guardians are important sources of influence. For example, parents' own early history of engagement in risk behaviors (e.g., Pratt et al., 2010; Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, & Lovegrove, 2009), childrearing strategies characterized by low levels of emotional support and the use of corporal punishment (e.g., Boduszek, Dhingra, & Debowska, 2016; Schroeder, Giordano, & Cernkovich, 2010), as well as exposure to

parents' intimate partner violence (Boduszek et al., 2016), are associated with the development of deviant identities. To explain these processes, the integrated psychosocial model of criminal social identity emphasized that "dysfunctional family" dynamics, such as inadequate parental supervision and inappropriate parenting styles, are associated with identity crises, which, in turn, weaken conventional bonds to society and lead to greater integration into criminal environments (Boduszek et al., 2016, p. 1025). Identity crises and corresponding low self-esteem may pressure individuals to participate in criminal peer networks that further encourage the formation of deviant identities (Boduszek et al., 2016). Moreover, bonds that connect individuals to society, such as involvement in gainful activity (e.g., being in school or the paid labor force) or being involved in a committed intimate relationship (i.e., cohabitation or marriage), hinder the development of deviant identities (e.g., Boduszek et al., 2016; Skardhamar, Savolainen, Aase, & Lyngstad, 2015). Additionally, formal labeling, often measured with criminal justice contact, and involvement in criminal activity, are known correlates of deviant identities (e.g., Brownfield & Thompson, 2008; Matsueda, 1992).

Sociodemographic characteristics, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, are also associated with self-identities. Prosocial identities generally increase as adolescents enter into young adulthood, and such identity processes may differ for men and women (Rocque, Posick, & Paternoster, 2016). Further, given that minority, compared with White, individuals are more likely to be stereotyped as dangerous and criminal (Tonry, 2011), race/ethnicity likely influences individuals' self-identities, especially when measured with reflected appraisals. Moreover, socioeconomic status may influence the adoption of deviant identities in that socioeconomic disadvantage may present unique barriers that hinder individuals' ability to adopt non-criminal roles and identities (Alarid & Vega, 2010).

Understanding the precursors of self-identities are particularly important because self-identities are consequential for guiding behavioral choices (Gecas, 1982; Heimer & Matsueda, 1994; Matsueda, 1992). Adhering to deviant identities influence engagement in antisocial behavior (e.g., Crank, 2018; Johnson, Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2016; Rocque et al., 2016). For example, researchers have found that identifying as a troublemaker in adolescence, measured with reflected appraisals, is associated with higher levels of intimate partner violence perpetration in adulthood (Giordano, Millhollin, Cernkovich, Pugh, & Rudolph, 1999). Reslan, Saules, and Serra's (2011) research, using a sample of college students (age 18-21), revealed that identifying as a partier, measured with a scale that included reflected appraisals, partially explained the association between binge drinking and a myriad of

consequences, including risky behaviors (e.g., physical altercations and damaging property). Recently, Johnson et al. (2016) found that identifying as a troublemaker and partier, also measured with reflected appraisals, was associated with higher trajectories of antisocial behavior from adolescence to adulthood. Summarizing, deviant identities, such as troublemaker/partier self-identities, are important for understanding involvement in antisocial behavior.

Given the well-documented association between identities and behavior, it is plausible that identity formation plays an important role in the intergenerational transmission of crime. As aforementioned, parental incarceration is associated with the intergenerational transmission of offending and involvement with the criminal justice system (Dallaire et al., 2015; Mears & Siennick, 2016; Murray et al., 2014; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Yet, criminologists have not specified the mechanisms underlying the influence of parental incarceration (Dallaire et al., 2015; Foster & Hagan, 2015). To determine whether deviant identities may be a social-psychological mechanism linking parental incarceration to antisocial behavior, we must first understand the association between parental incarceration and individuals' self-identities.

Incarcerated parents experience identity transformations in which the identity of an "inmate" represses and interrupts the identity of a "parent" (Arditti, Smock, & Parkman, 2005; Dyer, 2005). By extension, the salience of incarcerated parents' inmate identities may influence children to develop a deviant identity. For example, Boudin and Zeller-Berkman's (2010, p. 85) qualitative research found that adolescents use their incarcerated mothers as a point of reference in constructing their own identities. Johnston and Sullivan's (2016) compilation of adult children's (ages 18-59) personal experiences with parental incarceration also illustrated the influence that parental incarceration has on self-identities. For example, Jeremy (age 33), whose father was incarcerated for most of his childhood, stated: "From a young age, I was convinced that my purpose in life was to follow in my dad's footsteps . . . [my dad's incarceration] created my image of myself as well" (Johnston & Sullivan, 2016, p. 97).

Similarly, Saunders (2018) found that adolescents' sense of self was "damaged" or "tainted" by having an incarcerated parent, particularly because others expected them to turn out like their incarcerated parent. Children confronted with parental incarceration may therefore develop deviant identities through the stigma and social exclusion that accompanies parental incarceration (Dallaire, Ciccone, & Wilson, 2010; Kautz, 2017; Phillips & Gates, 2011). As Shaw (2016) noted, entire family units can be seen as criminal because others label them as such through their connection to a criminal family member, which Goffman (1963) termed a "courtesy stigma." Given that individuals who have a connection to someone in the criminal justice system face social exclusion, hostility, and

a lack of respect from others, courtesy stigmas may result in limited access to conventional (i.e., non-criminal) identities. Recent research supports this idea. For example, Dallaire et al. (2010) found that teachers had lower performance expectations for children who had an incarcerated parent. Similarly, Wildeman, Scardamalia, Walsh, O'Brien, and Brew's (2017) study revealed that teachers expected children with an incarcerated father to display problem behaviors (e.g., anxious and depressive behaviors and attention seeking behaviors) more so than children with non-incarcerated parents. The courtesy stigma that children of incarcerated parents face may therefore lead to greater acceptance of deviant identities.

Interestingly, Luther (2016) noted that adult children's separation (physical and/or emotional) from their incarcerated parent(s) helped them to manage their courtesy stigma and ultimately enabled them to develop prosocial identities. Thus, when considering the factors that are associated with identity formation, it is also important to consider separation-individuation. Separation-individuation is an aspect of adolescent and young adult psychosocial maturation that entails developing a sense of self separate from one's parents (Blos, 1979; Kroger, 1985; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 2015; Zupančič & Kavčič, 2014). One dimension of individuation is developing emotional independence, which involves freedom from the excessive need for parents' approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support (Hoffman, 1984). It is well accepted that developing emotional independence is a normative task of separation-individuation (Blos, 1979; Mahler, 1967; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). However, controversy over the distinction between normative and maladaptive emotional independence, termed "the detachment debate," has emerged (Alonso-Stuyck, Zacarés, & Ferreres, 2018; Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Majorano, Musetti, Brondino, & Corsano, 2015). The detachment debate has led researchers to distinguish between healthy and maladaptive levels of emotional independence.

High levels of emotional independence may represent radical and unhealthy separation and detachment from parents, which can be characterized by distrust, alienation, and having no desire for parents' approval (Koepke & Denissen, 2012). Scholars have found that high emotional independence is associated with internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors (Ingoglia, Lo Coco, Liga, & Grazia Lo Cricchio, 2011; Pace & Zappulla, 2010). In contrast, low levels of emotional independence may represent excessive, child-like dependence on parents. Low emotional independence involves dependence on and preoccupation with parents' approval and attachment, and is associated with worse mental health (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010), as well as poor social skills and delinquency (Allen et al., 2002). Conversely, moderate levels of emotional independence represent a healthy balance of independence

from and connection to parents (Geuzaine, Debry, & Liesens, 2000; Lapsley, Rice, & Shadid, 1989; Zupančič & Kavčič, 2014). Moderate levels of emotional independence encompass mutual trust and warmth, and are linked to psychosocial maturity (Koepeke & Denissen, 2012). Thus, it is generally accepted that young adults must find “a balance between enmeshment with parental identifications and complete disengagement and isolation” (Lapsley et al., 1989, p. 286).

However, researchers outlining the problems associated with high and low emotional independence have typically assumed that adult children have parents who hold conventional values that are accepted by mainstream society (i.e., law abiding, non-incarcerated parents). Existing research on emotional independence has not considered the consequences of high or low emotional independence among young adults exposed to parental incarceration. Consequently, conclusions about finding a balance between enmeshment and complete disengagement with parents may not be generalizable to children of incarcerated parents.

Children’s separation from an incarcerated parent may result in feelings of uncertainty regarding the incarcerated parent’s love and affection. Such separation may ultimately result in low emotional independence, or excessive concern over gaining parental approval (Ainsworth & Ainsworth, 1958; Frank, Pirch, & Wright, 1990; Josselson, 1980). Although parents who are involved in the justice system do not necessarily encourage their children to develop deviant identities or engage in crime, children likely interpret their parents’ behavior (i.e., involvement in the criminal justice system) and guidelines/rules (i.e., parents’ disapproval of deviant identities or involvement in crime or the criminal justice system) as contradictory messages (Ebersole, Miller-Day, & Raup-Krieger, 2014). Thus, particularly for adult children who have low emotional independence, exposure to parental incarceration may increase the odds of acquiring a deviant identity, such as troublemaker/partier, in an attempt to gain parents’ love and affection.

Identity formation, however, is a complex, life-long process affected by a range of experiences and filtered through individuals’ unique biographies and proclivities. As individuals mature in young adulthood, those who have experienced parental incarceration may engage in a process of emotional and, eventually, identity distancing that serves a protective function. It is therefore plausible that high emotional independence, or attributing little importance to gaining parents’ approval and developing a sense of self separate from one’s parents, may be an important dimension of positive identity formation for those who have experienced parental incarceration (Beyers, Goossens, Van Calster, & Duriez, 2005; Kroger, 1985; Majorano et al., 2015; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986).

Indeed, researchers have found that some adolescent and adult children with high emotional independence desire to construct identities *distinct* from that of parents who have been incarcerated (e.g., Johnston & Sullivan, 2016; Saunders, 2018). Luther's (2016) qualitative research with college students (ages 18-39) who experienced parental incarceration during childhood found that the development of high emotional independence fostered prosocial individuation. Julian, exemplifying his detachment from and negative feelings towards his incarcerated father, stated: "I don't like my dad. I don't like him at all. ... He is what he is, that doesn't involve me. I just feel sorry for him ... so I don't consider my dad my father or anything. So I pretty much discarded him" (Luther, 2016, p. 7). Notably, Giordano (2010) found that adolescents who developed an identity in sharp contrast to that of antisocial parents were more likely to be successful in disrupting the intergenerational transmission of crime. Thus, when youths are presented with adverse childhood experiences, such as parental incarceration (Arditti & Salva, 2015), high emotional independence (which encompasses *not* looking to parents for approval) may be a particularly important social psychological dynamic linked to healthier development.

We used data from a sample of young adult men and women, the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS) ($n = 965$), and publically available incarceration records, to address two research questions. First, we investigated the association between parental incarceration and emerging adults' troublemaker/partier identity. Having a history of parental incarceration, including maternal or paternal incarceration, during childhood (i.e., before respondents were 18 years of age) was measured through parent/guardian-reports and official records. Identifying as a troublemaker/partier during adulthood (i.e., when respondents were 18 years of age or older) was measured with reflected appraisals. We hypothesized that experiencing the incarceration of a parent would be positively associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier. Second, we examined how emotional independence, as measured by the relative importance that young adults attributed to gaining parental approval, influenced the association between parental incarceration and young adults' endorsement of a troublemaker/partier identity. We hypothesized that parental incarceration would be associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier for young adults who had low emotional independence (i.e., for whom gaining parental approval was very important), but would not be for those who had high emotional independence (i.e., for whom gaining parental approval was not at all important). Given the known correlates of self-identities, we included parental factors (parents' own teen risk behavior, parental support, parents' use of corporal punishment, parents' intimate partner violence), individual characteristics (juvenile detention, criminal behavior, drug use, alcohol use, peers' criminal behavior, peers' drug

use, peers' alcohol use, self-esteem, gainful activity, and relationship status), and sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, family structure, mother's education) in our analyses.

Method

Participants

We used data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS)¹, a sample of men and women interviewed five times over a period of ten years (2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2011). Respondents were between the ages 12-19 at the first interview, and ages 22-29 at the fifth interview. The first interview included 1,321 respondents. Of the initial sample of 1,321 respondents, those who did not have valid data on the focal independent (i.e., parental incarceration) or dependent (i.e., troublemaker/partier) variable were excluded, yielding an analytic sample of 965.

Our sample, comprised equally of men (50%) and women (50%), included young adults aged 18 to 28 years ($M = 18.67$; $SD = 1.50$). Regarding race and ethnicity, most (67%) were White (21% were Black, 10% were Hispanic, and 2% identified as some other racial/ethnic group). Most (56%) of our sample lived with both biological parents during childhood, although 13% lived with a step parent, 20% lived with a single parent, and 11% lived in a household with some other family structure, such as living with grandparents, foster or adoptive parents, other relatives, or other non-relatives. As for respondents' mother's education, which served as our proxy for socioeconomic status, approximately 11% of respondents' mothers had less than a high school diploma, 32% had a high school diploma, 34% had earned some college credits, and 23% had earned a college degree or higher. Although a regional survey, compared to data from the American Community Survey (2011), the TARS sample has similar sociodemographic characteristics to national surveys of emerging adults, ages 23-28, in terms of gender, race, and employment status, for example.

Procedure

The initial stratified, random sample of 1,321 adolescents (and their parent/guardian at the first interview) were drawn from enrollment records of all students registered for the seventh, ninth, and eleventh grades in the year 2000 in Lucas County, Ohio. School attendance was not required for inclusion in the sample. The sampling frame, developed by the National Opinion Research Center, was comprised of 62 schools across seven school districts. The

¹ **Data availability statement:** Data are available at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/>).

majority of the interviews took place in-person (in respondents' homes); however, an online option was available for the fourth and fifth interviews (in 2006 and 2011, respectively) for those who had moved from the original study area or who were reluctant to participate in the in-person interview.

To supplement the TARS data, we completed online public record searches of the respondents' parents' incarceration records (including maternal or paternal incarceration). After identifying and confirming the names of the biological parents, we searched for corresponding public court records for any city of residence listed by parents or core respondents. The records were linked to the target individuals using their estimated birth year, and other information to confirm court and police records including: middle names, residential addresses, previous names, or family relationships listed in publicly available warrants, affidavits, police reports, and citations. Official documents and records were thoroughly examined for any details that indicated a stay in jail or prison. Using respondents' date of birth and the dates noted in the official records, we determined whether parents experienced incarceration prior to the respondent turning 18.

For the analyses, we used in-home interview data, data from the parent/guardian questionnaire, and data from the parental incarceration official records search. Missing data on the majority of covariates was minimal (< 2%), although one exception was in the case of respondents' retrospective reports of witnessing parents' intimate partner violence (15%). To address this missing data, we use multiple imputation across five imputed datasets via the 'PROC MI' procedure in SAS 9.4.

Measures

Dependent variable: troublemaker/partier.

We measured identifying as a *troublemaker/partier* using reflected appraisals, which indicate how individuals perceive how others see them. Reflected appraisals are appropriate for measuring identities given that individuals internalize how they think others label them (Asencio, 2011, 2013; Lemert, 1967; Matsueda, 1992); thus, operationalizing identities with reflected appraisals is a standard and common approach (e.g., Giordano, Longmore, Manning, & Northcutt, 2009; Matsueda, 1992; Maurer, Pleck, & Rane, 2001). Similar to previous studies, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed that other individuals would describe them as a "troublemaker" and "partier" (e.g., Giordano et al., 1999; Giordano et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2016; Reslan et al., 2011). Responses ranged from (0) "strongly agree" to (4) "strongly disagree." Following Giordano et al. (2009), we dichotomously coded respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the description (i.e., troublemaker *and* partier)

as having the identity, and other respondents as not having the identity. Respondents' identity as a troublemaker/partier was measured at the first respective interview when respondents were 18 years of age or older. Given TARS' design, respondents' outcomes were measured at different interviews (e.g., if a respondent was 18 at the first interview, their outcome was measured at the first interview, whereas if a respondent turned 18 at the third interview, their outcome was measured at the third interview).

Given that having a single deviant identity (i.e., troublemaker *or* partier) is not unusual because identity experimentation and exploration is normative during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Boduszek et al., 2016), having the reflected appraisals of a "troublemaker" and "partier" is arguably indicative of a solidified deviant identity. That is, because respondents have to meet more "stringent" criteria to be considered as having a deviant identity (i.e., reporting the reflected appraisal of a troublemaker and partier as opposed to having only one of the reflected appraisals), we contend that the way in which we created this measure is more telling of a deviant identity than measures that code individuals who only identified with one of these items as having a deviant identity.

Focal independent variable: parental incarceration.

Parental incarceration combined parents' reports and official records of parental incarceration. In the parent interview, parents/guardians responded to a question about changes in their child's (core respondent) living situation due to a parent going to prison (the gender of the incarcerated parent was not specified). Additionally, we gathered publicly available electronic records for respondents' biological parents to determine whether official records indicated a stay in jail or prison, and these data were used to enhance the parent-reported measure of parental incarceration. Since the parent-reported measure reflected instances of parental incarceration up until the time of the first TARS interview (when some respondents were as young as 12 years old), the official data offered the advantage of capturing cases of parental incarceration for a longer period of time (up until the child's age of 18). Moreover, because parental incarceration affects child outcomes even when the child does not live with the parent (Geller et al., 2012), the online public records search enhanced the parents' reports by providing information on parental incarceration even for respondents who did not necessarily reside with their biological parents. That is, the parent-reported measure of parental incarceration reflected a change in living situation due to parental incarceration, whereas the official measure was more inclusive by identifying instances of parental incarceration for parents who did not live with the child. Thus, the official records search provided a useful supplement to the parent-reported data on parental incarceration. The overall measure of parental incarceration was coded as "1" when the parent report or

official records indicated parental incarceration and “0” when the parent report and official records indicated no parental incarceration.

Moderator: emotional independence.

Emotional independence encompasses freedom from the excessive need of parents’ approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support (Hoffman, 1984). In the current paper, we focused on one aspect of emotional independence: freedom from the need for parental approval. To measure this aspect of *emotional independence*, we used a single item that asked respondents (at the first respective interview where respondents were 18 years of age or older) how important it was to gain their parents’ approval (Hoffman, 1984). Responses included (0) “very important,” (1) “pretty important,” (2) “somewhat important,” (3) “not too important,” and (4) “not at all important.” Lower values reflected low emotional independence (i.e., dependence on parental approval) and higher values reflected high emotional independence (i.e., detachment from parental approval).

Correlates of self-identities.

Parental factors. We included measures for parents’ own risk behavior when they were teenagers, parental support, corporal punishment, and parents’ intimate partner violence as indicators of parental factors. With the exception of parents’ intimate partner violence, all were reported by parents/guardians in the parent interview. *Parents’ teen risk behavior* was measured from parents’/guardians’ retrospective reports of their own risk behavior. We created the measure as a count (ranging from 0 – 6) of the following yes/no items that reflected parents’/guardians’ behavior as a teenager: (1) were involved in extracurricular activities (reverse coded); (2) were suspended/expelled from school; (3) got pregnant/got someone pregnant; (4) were arrested (5) drank alcohol; and (6) used drugs.

Parental support (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .71$) during childhood was measured with four items that asked parents to what extent they agreed [ranging from (0) “strongly disagree” to (4) “strongly agree”] that (1) they like to hear everything about what their child is into; (2) it is easy to have a good time with their child; (3) their child is closer to them than other kids are to their parents; and (4) they get along well with their child (Hirschi, 1969). We averaged these four items to create a single scale of parental support. *Corporal punishment* was measured with two items from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) that asked if the parent/guardian had (1) “threatened to physically hurt” or (2) “pushed, grabbed, slapped, or hit” their child in the month preceding the interview; these were combined into a dichotomous variable that indicated whether or not the

parent/guardian engaged in corporal punishment. Exposure to *parents' intimate partner violence* was also included using four items from an abbreviated version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus et al., 1996). Measured from respondents' retrospective reports at the fifth interview, respondents reported whether they had witnessed either one of their parents (1) "throw something at the other"; (2) "push, shove, or grab the other"; (3) "slap the other in the face or head with an open hand"; or (4) "hit the other" during childhood. These items were created as a dichotomous variable that indicated whether or not respondents witnessed their parents' engaging in any intimate partner violence.

Individual characteristics. We also accounted for individual characteristics, including juvenile detention, self-reported criminal behavior, drug use, and alcohol use, peers' criminal behavior, peers' drug use, and peers' alcohol use, as well as self-esteem, gainful activity, and union status, in our analyses. We measured all individual characteristics (with the exception of juvenile detention) at the first interview in which respondents were 18 or older. To control for official labeling by the criminal justice system, we included a measure of *juvenile detention*. Using a retrospective question at the fourth interview, we created a binary measure that indicated whether the respondent had been incarcerated in a juvenile detention center or state facility as a minor.

Criminal behavior (Cronbach's α was .87, .82, .78, .72, and .78 at the first through fifth interview, respectively) was the average of a 7-item summation score that asked how often [ranging from engaging in the behavior (0) "never" to (8) "more than once a day"] respondents had: (1) stole/tried to steal something worth less than \$5 or (2) more than \$50; (3) damaged/destroyed property; (4) carried a weapon; (5) attacked someone to seriously hurt them; (6) sold drugs; and (7) broken/tried to break into a building or vehicle (Elliott & Ageton, 1980). We created two separate indicators for respondents' *drug use* and *alcohol use*, which were measured with questions that asked how often respondents used drugs to get high and got drunk, respectively, in the year preceding the interview. Responses for both the drug and alcohol use measures ranged from (0) "never" to (8) "more than once a day." *Peers' criminal behavior* used the same items as respondents' own criminal behavior (Cronbach's α levels were .81, .84, .87, .88, and .80 at each interview, respectively). Likewise, the measures for *peers' drug use* and *peers' alcohol use* used the same items as respondents' own drug and alcohol use.

We measured *self-esteem* (Cronbach's α levels were .71, .74, .76, .77, and .76 at each interview, respectively) as a mean scale with six items from Rosenberg's (1979) scale. Respondents indicated how much they agreed [ranging from (0) "strongly disagree" to (4) "strongly agree"] that they (1) are able to do things as well as

other people; (2) have a number of good qualities; (3) do not have much to be proud of (reverse coded); (4) think they are no good (reverse coded); (5) feel that they are a person of worth; and (6) take a positive attitude toward their self. A dichotomous measure of *gainful activity* indicated whether respondents were currently employed full-time or enrolled in school (Alvira-Hammond, Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2014). We assessed whether respondents were currently *single* (reference category was cohabiting or married) to reflect relationship status. Given that men and women in the U.S. are now marrying at later ages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), and we measured union status at the first respective interview respondents were 18 or older, the reference category combined cohabiting and married individuals because few respondents (1.24%) reported being married.

Sociodemographic background. We included age, gender, race/ethnicity, family structure, and mother's education as indicators of sociodemographic background. We measured respondents' *age* in years at the first interview in which respondents were 18 or older. We measured gender (*male*) and *race* [non-Hispanic White (reference category), non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and 'other'] at the first interview. *Family structure*, measured in the parent questionnaire, included four dichotomous indicators for whether the respondent, while growing up, resided with two biological parents (reference category), a step-family, a single-parent family, or any other family type. *Mother's education*, measured in the parent questionnaire, was an indicator of socioeconomic status while growing up, and consisted of dichotomous variables for less than high school (reference category), high school, some college, and college graduate or more.

Data Analyses

We analyzed these data using SAS 9.4. After examining descriptive statistics (Table 1) and the zero-order model (Model 1 in Table 2), we examined the relationship between parental incarceration and identifying as a troublemaker/partier controlling for sociodemographic background (Model 2). We expected that emotional independence would be especially salient as a moderating influence, and therefore added emotional independence and the interaction term separately from the other measures (Model 3). In the full model (Model 4), we included all the aforementioned parental factors and individual characteristics.

Results

Table 1 presents the means/proportions for all variables by parental incarceration. Nearly one-third (318/965 = 33%) of young adult respondents experienced parental incarceration (recorded through parents' self-reports or official records) before the age of 18. Additionally, 11% of all respondents reported identifying as a

troublemaker/partier. A higher proportion ($p < .001$) of respondents who experienced parental incarceration (14%), compared with those who did not (10%), identified as a troublemaker/partier during emerging adulthood. On average, the level of emotional independence was higher among those who experienced parental incarceration (1.38 versus 1.13, $p < .001$).

As displayed in Table 2, parental incarceration was associated marginally ($p = .065$) with identifying as a troublemaker/partier during emerging adulthood. That is, children exposed to parental incarceration were marginally more likely identify as a troublemaker/partier as young adults than children who were not exposed to parental incarceration. Regarding sociodemographic background characteristics, men were more likely ($p < .01$) to identify as a troublemaker/partier than women. As for parental factors, parents' teen risk behavior and parents' use of corporal punishment were positively associated ($p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively) with identifying as a troublemaker/partier in emerging adulthood. Regarding individual characteristics, respondents' contact with the criminal justice system (juvenile detention), criminal behavior, drug use, and alcohol use, as well as peers' criminal behavior, drug use, and alcohol use, increased the likelihood ($p < .001$) of identifying as a troublemaker/partier. The only variable negatively associated ($p < .05$) with the development of a deviant identity was parental support.

Model 2 displays unstandardized logistic regression estimates of the association between parental incarceration and identifying as a troublemaker/partier controlling for sociodemographic background. With a binary dependent variable, all coefficients can be interpreted as a percent change in the odds of having a troublemaker/partier identity for a unit increase in a respective covariate after computing $100 * [exp(b_{kx_k}) - 1]$. For instance, Model 2 illustrates that the odds of identifying as a troublemaker/partier were 89% ($100 * [exp(.64) - 1]$; $p < .01$) higher among adult men than women. In this model, parental incarceration was not associated with young adults' troublemaker/partier identity. That is, children exposed to parental incarceration were no more likely to identify as a troublemaker/partier than children who did not experience the incarceration of a parent.

In the next model (Model 3), we added emotional independence and an interaction term between parental incarceration and emotional independence. The positive coefficient of the direct effect of parental incarceration (.79; $p < .05$) shows that experiencing parental incarceration increased the likelihood of identifying as a troublemaker/partier. However, the effect of parental incarceration varied by emotional independence; the negative interaction term (-.39; $p < .05$) suggests that the consequences of parental incarceration on identity diminish with higher levels of emotional independence. Specifically, among those who had low emotional independence, parental

incarceration was associated with 121% ($100 * [exp (.79 + (-.39 * 0)) - 1]$; $p < .05$) higher odds of identifying as a troublemaker/partier. Conversely, among those who had high emotional independence, parental incarceration was *not* significantly associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier. To aid in this interpretation, this interaction is illustrated in Figure 1. This figure exemplifies that, for those who experienced parental incarceration, the predicted probability of identifying as a troublemaker/partier during adulthood was significantly higher for those with low emotional independence (for whom gaining parental approval was very important) relative to those with high emotional independence (for whom parental approval was unimportant).

In the full model (Model 4), we added parental factors and individual characteristics. The association between parental incarceration and having the reflected appraisal of a troublemaker/partier generally persisted. Again, children who experienced parental incarceration were more likely ($p < .05$) to develop a deviant identity during adulthood than children who did not experience parental incarceration, although the effect of parental incarceration varied by emotional independence. Each unit increase in emotional independence decreased the influence of parental incarceration on adults' deviant identity. For those with low emotional independence, parental incarceration was associated with 119% ($100 * [exp (.79 + (-.50 * 0)) - 1]$; $p < .05$) higher odds of identifying as a troublemaker/partier. In contrast, among those with high emotional independence, parental incarceration was not associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier. In other words, children with low emotional independence who experienced parental incarceration were more likely to develop a deviant identity than children with high emotional independence who also experienced parental incarceration. Overall, our results indicated that the consequences associated with parental incarceration were strongest when children had low emotional independence and were weakest when children had high emotional independence.

Discussion

Parental incarceration is associated with a host of problematic outcomes for children, such as mental health issues (Swisher & Roettger, 2012) and poor educational performance (Hagan & Foster, 2012); such consequences extend into adulthood (e.g., Hagan & Foster, 2012; Lee et al., 2013). Researchers have also found that parental incarceration is associated with the intergenerational transmission of crime. That is, experiencing the incarceration of a parent is associated with engaging in delinquency and crime, as well as contact with the criminal justice system, throughout the life course (Besemer et al., 2011; Geller et al., 2012; Mears & Siennick, 2016; Murray et al., 2014; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Yet, the mechanisms underlying the association between parental incarceration and

offending is largely unknown (Dallaire et al. 2015; Foster & Hagan 2015). Given that deviant identities influence engagement in antisocial behavior (e.g., Crank, 2018; Johnson et al., 2016; Rocque et al., 2016), identity formation may be an important factor in the intergenerational transmission of crime, particularly for children exposed to parental incarceration. To begin investigating this possibility, we examined the ways in which parental incarceration influenced young adults' troublemaker/partier identity, and examined whether the influence of parental incarceration varied by the level of young adults' emotional independence. Our results were generally consistent with the limited qualitative research on parental incarceration and identity processes (e.g., Boudin & Zeller-Berkman, 2010; Giordano, 2010; Johnston & Sullivan, 2016; Luther, 2016; Saunders, 2018).

Using a sample of men and women from the TARS, we found that parental incarceration exhibited a significant association with identifying as a troublemaker/partier, albeit only when taking into account the moderating effects of emotional independence. Specifically, we found that high emotional independence, or *not* desiring parental approval, acted as a protective factor in the relationship between parental incarceration and having a deviant reflected appraisal. As hypothesized, parental incarceration was positively associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier for young adults with low emotional independence (for whom gaining parental approval was very important), but *not* among those with high emotional independence (for whom parental approval was unimportant).

To understand the association between parental incarceration and identifying as a troublemaker/partier among those with low emotional independence, we drew on the notion of courtesy stigmas (Goffman, 1963) and previous research that has found that children of incarcerated parents are labeled negatively through their connection to an incarcerated parent (e.g., Dallaire et al., 2010; Kautz, 2017; Luther, 2016; Phillips & Gates, 2011; Saunders, 2018; Wildeman et al., 2017). That is, when children experience parental incarceration, we presume that social exclusion limits children's ability to access law-abiding roles and identities in familial, peer, educational, and career contexts. Given the unsettling nature of separation-individuation for those with low emotional independence (Allen et al., 2002), it is not surprising that those with low emotional independence rely on parental approval and attachment and do not necessarily develop an individualized sense of self when faced with limited access to conventional roles (Mahler et al., 2015; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). In other words, it is understandable that adult children with low emotional independence who experienced parental incarceration develop deviant identities,

plausibly due to rejection from non-criminal identities and roles, which further promotes excessive concern over maintaining a connection with their incarcerated parent(s).

To understand why parental incarceration was not associated with identifying as a troublemaker/partier among those with high emotional independence, we turned to qualitative research that has found that some children engage in a process of emotional and identity disengagement that facilitates the development of values, beliefs, and identities distinct from that of a parent who has been incarcerated (e.g., Giordano, 2010; Luther, 2016). Although some studies have found that high emotional independence is associated with internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Ingoglia et al., 2011; Pace & Zappulla, 2010), in instances when children are exposed to adverse family experiences, such as parental incarceration, we surmise that high emotional independence may be a protective factor for children's outcomes across the life course. Future studies should investigate whether this pattern holds with other samples of young adults. Additionally, in an effort to ultimately implement evidence based programs that combat the consequences associated with parental incarceration, future research should proceed by examining what factors encourage high emotional independence among children exposed to parental incarceration.

The larger implications of this research are pertinent to understanding the mechanisms of the influence of parental incarceration on children's outcomes across the life course. Specifically, because identities influence behavior (e.g., Gecas, 1982; Matsueda, 1992), it is conceivable that identity processes may be a key mediating mechanism in the association between parental incarceration and adolescent and adult children's behavioral outcomes. Importantly, our study provides evidence for intergenerational *dis*-continuities in deviant identities for young adults with high emotional independence. Although beyond the scope of the current paper, future research should consider whether such identity processes are linked to intergenerational continuities and discontinuities in crime, as those who experience parental incarceration may exhibit discontinuities in crime if they emotionally detach from and do not identify with their incarcerated parent(s).

Limitations

Our study has some limitations that future research could address. For one, although the parent-reported incarceration measure was supplemented with searches for official records for respondents' parents, the official records data were imperfect. Some parents could have been incarcerated in locations outside of the search radius. Additionally, when parent names were not reported, it was impossible to determine whether the respondent experienced parental incarceration. Furthermore, the official records of parental incarceration only provided us with

data on whether or not respondents had a parent incarcerated between the ages of 0 and 18, and did not consistently indicate the length of incarceration. Moreover, although we were able to distinguish between maternal and paternal incarceration with the official incarceration records data, the parent-reported measure of parental incarceration did not specify whether respondents experienced maternal and paternal incarceration. Unfortunately, relying only on the official records of incarceration would have resulted in the exclusion of respondents who had experienced parental incarceration wherein the gender of the incarcerated parent was unknown (i.e., parental incarceration based on the parent-reported measure) and was unable to be confirmed with official records. Future research should therefore test the robustness of these results also using measures of official parental incarceration records and should strive to further tease out the effects of parental incarceration on identity development by examining the duration and frequency of incarceration (e.g., Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015) as well as the effects of maternal versus paternal incarceration (e.g., Burgess-Proctor, Huebner, & Durso, 2016).

The parental factors included in the current study were also limited. For example, retrospective reports of parents' risky behavior as a teenager, albeit useful, was not available for both biological parents. Additionally, although we accounted for some parenting domains, it would be worthwhile to examine other parenting strategies known to influence identity development, such as autonomy-supportive parenting (e.g., Kaniūšonytė & Žukauskienė, 2018). Moreover, given that some scholars have posited that the consequences of parental incarceration are not fully attributable to the incarceration itself, but instead to other familial characteristics associated with incarceration, such as disadvantage and offending (e.g., Giordano & Copp, 2015; Murray et al., 2014), future studies could delve deeper into other familial characteristics, such as substance use/abuse, mental health, and offending, that may explain the association between parental incarceration and deviant identity development.

Further, although the results in the present study suggested that high emotional independence was a protective factor for those exposed to parental incarceration, the indicator for emotional independence was admittedly limited. Whereas Hoffman's (1984) scale of emotional independence included 17 items that measured freedom from the excessive need of parents' approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support, we were only able to assess one aspect of emotional independence: young adults' freedom from the need for parental approval. Additionally, it was impossible to tell whether respondents answered the question regarding their parents' approval with their incarcerated parent in mind or not, as this measure referenced respondents' parents as a unit. Moreover, it is plausible that the importance of gaining parental approval is not an accurate representation of how young adult

children subjectively define emotional independence or having an identity in contrast to a parent. It is also plausible that emerging adults use terms other than “troublemaker” and “partier” to describe deviant identities. Further, given the multifaceted and dynamic nature of self-identities, it would be valuable for scholars to investigate the influence of parental incarceration on more comprehensive measures of deviant identities over the life course while accounting for other self-identities (Erikson, 1968; Rocque et al., 2016; Stryker, 1968). Future research should therefore aim to utilize other indicators of emotional independence and identity to test the robustness of our results.

Given that minority children are more likely to experience parental incarceration than white children (Turney, 2017), it is plausible that parental incarceration may be less stigmatizing, and, in turn, less consequential for the development of a troublemaker/partier reflected appraisal among minority children (Phillips & Gates, 2011). Some research has also found that sons and daughters experience different repercussions of parental incarceration (e.g., Burgess-Proctor et al., 2016; Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015) and some scholars have suggested that identity development differs for men and women (Rocque et al., 2016). Exploring the role of race/ethnicity and gender in the association between parental incarceration and identity is therefore another avenue for future research to examine. Overall, then, there is still much to be considered in the association between parental incarceration and adult children’s identity.

In conclusion, using TARS data, this study provided evidence that parental incarceration was only associated with a troublemaker/partier identity during emerging adulthood among those with low emotional independence. That is, parental incarceration was not associated with a troublemaker/partier identity among those with high emotional independence. Importantly, these findings suggest that encouraging and facilitating high emotional independence among those exposed to parental incarceration, or the development of freedom from the excessive need for parents’ approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support, may combat the commonly observed intergenerational transmission of antisocial identities and behavior.

Data availability statement: Data are available at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/>).

Author Contributions:

JF: was the primary writer of the manuscript, conducted the analyses, and assisted in collecting the TARS official incarceration records data. ML: collaborated in the writing and editing of the manuscript and is a principal investigator of the TARS. PG: collaborated in the editing of the final manuscript and is a principal investigator of the TARS. WM: collaborated in the editing of the final manuscript and is a principal investigator of the TARS.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Means/Proportions) for Young Adult Troublemaker/Partier Identity, Emotional Independence, and all Covariates by Parental Incarceration (Parent Reported or Official Records)

	Parental Incarceration (n = 318)	No Parental Incarceration (n = 647)	Test Statistic ^{a,b}	Total Sample (n = 965)	Standard Deviation	Range
Dependent Variable						
Troublemaker/Partier Identity ^a	0.14	0.10	-3.93 ***	0.11	0.31	0-1
Moderator						
Emotional Independence ^a	1.38	1.13	-6.81 ***	1.21	1.10	0-4
Correlates of Self-Identities						
Sociodemographic Background						
Age ^a	18.74	18.63	-2.50 *	18.67	1.50	18-28
Male ^b	0.48	0.51	-0.80	0.50	0.50	0-1
Race ^b						
White (Reference)	0.39	0.81	-12.82 ***	0.67	0.47	0-1
Black	0.42	0.10	11.52 ***	0.21	0.41	0-1
Hispanic	0.17	0.07	5.02 ***	0.10	0.30	0-1
Other	0.02	0.02	-0.47	0.02	0.14	0-1
Family Structure ^b						
Biological Parents (Reference)	0.27	0.70	-12.54 ***	0.56	0.50	0-1
Step Parent	0.18	0.10	3.43 ***	0.13	0.34	0-1
Single Parent	0.32	0.15	6.27 ***	0.20	0.40	0-1
Other Family	0.23	0.05	8.13 ***	0.11	0.32	0-1
Mother's Education ^b						
Less than High School (Reference)	0.21	0.06	7.21 ***	0.11	0.31	0-1
High School	0.34	0.31	0.71	0.32	0.47	0-1
Some College	0.37	0.32	1.43	0.34	0.47	0-1
College or More	0.08	0.31	-7.64 ***	0.23	0.42	0-1
Parental Factors						
Parents' Teen Risk Behavior ^a	1.74	1.37	-8.45 ***	1.49	1.35	0-6
Parental Support ^a	3.21	3.25	1.85 †	3.24	0.58	0-4
Corporal Punishment ^b	0.19	0.12	2.89 **	0.14	0.35	0-1
Parents' Intimate Partner Violence ^b	0.52	0.22	9.03 ***	0.32	0.47	0-1
Individual Characteristics						
Juvenile Detention ^b	0.07	0.03	3.07 **	0.04	0.20	0-1
Criminal Behavior ^a	0.26	0.12	-8.81 ***	0.16	0.44	0-7
Drug Use ^a	1.38	1.03	-4.75 ***	1.15	2.28	0-8
Alcohol Use ^a	2.26	2.61	5.38 ***	2.49	2.15	0-8
Peers' Criminal Behavior ^a	0.76	0.33	-12.09 ***	0.47	0.98	0-7
Peers' Drug Use ^a	2.59	1.91	-7.74 ***	2.14	2.72	0-8
Peers' Alcohol Use ^a	3.52	3.62	1.50	3.59	2.27	0-8
Self-Esteem ^a	3.02	3.03	0.75	4.02	0.58	0-4
Gainful Activity ^b	0.67	0.83	-5.53 ***	0.77	0.42	0-1
Single ^b	0.82	0.91	-4.38 ***	0.88	0.32	0-1

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

^aIndependent sample t-test for continuous variables

^bIndependent sample z-test for dichotomous variables

Table 2. Logistic Regression Estimates (and Standard Errors) of Young Adult Troublemaker/Partier Identity on Parental Incarceration (Parent-Reported or Official Records), Emotional Independence, and Other Covariates

Predictor	Zero-Order		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE
Parental Incarceration	0.39	(0.21) †	0.30	(0.25)	0.79	(0.35) *	0.79	(0.39) *
Emotional Independence	0.02	(0.09)			0.16	(0.13)	0.11	(0.14)
Parental Incarceration*Emotional Independence					-0.39	(0.20) *	-0.50	(0.22) *
Correlates of Self-Identities								
Sociodemographic Background								
Age	-0.11	(0.09)	-0.11	(0.09)	-0.10	(0.09)	-0.10	(0.10)
Male	0.59	(0.21) **	0.64	(0.22) **	0.61	(0.22) **	0.21	(0.25)
Race (White)								
Black	0.07	(0.25)	-0.11	(0.29)	-0.09	(0.29)	0.30	(0.34)
Hispanic	0.55	(0.30) †	0.51	(0.33)	0.49	(0.33)	0.30	(0.37)
Other	-0.74	(1.03)	-0.68	(1.05)	-0.74	(1.05)	-0.34	(1.06)
Family Structure (Biological Parents)								
Step Parent	0.53	(0.27) †	0.66	(0.30) *	0.68	(0.31) *	0.28	(0.35)
Single Parent	0.30	(0.24)	0.47	(0.28) †	0.47	(0.28) †	0.16	(0.31)
Other Family	0.13	(0.32)	0.41	(0.36)	0.41	(0.36)	0.25	(0.41)
Mother's Education (Less than HS)								
High School	0.11	(0.22)	0.80	(0.45) †	0.83	(0.45) †	0.86	(0.51) †
Some College	0.15	(0.21)	0.83	(0.45) †	0.85	(0.45) †	0.97	(0.51) †
College or More	-0.09	(0.25)	0.84	(0.49) †	0.89	(0.49) †	1.08	(0.56) †
Parental Factors								
Parents' Teen Risk Behavior	0.27	(0.07) ***					0.20	(0.08) *
Corporal Punishment	0.71	(0.25) **					0.60	(0.30) *
Parental Support	-0.42	(0.17) *					-0.22	(0.19)
Parents' Intimate Partner Violence	0.02	(0.28)					-0.25	(0.41)
Individual Characteristics								
Juvenile Detention	1.40	(0.35) ***					0.91	(0.44) *
Criminal Behavior	1.10	(0.17) ***					0.46	(0.23) †
Drug Use	0.21	(0.04) ***					0.01	(0.06)
Alcohol Use	0.30	(0.05) ***					0.20	(0.07) **
Peers' Criminal Behavior	0.52	(0.08) ***					0.27	(0.12) *
Peers' Drug Use	0.20	(0.03) ***					0.02	(0.06)
Peers' Alcohol Use	0.27	(0.05) ***					0.06	(0.08)
Self-Esteem	0.03	(0.18)					0.18	(0.21)
Gainful Activity	0.11	(0.25)					0.35	(0.30)
Single	0.37	(0.37)					0.72	(0.45)
Constant			-3.61	(0.48) ***	-3.19	(0.62) ***	-4.38	(0.86) ***

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

n = 965

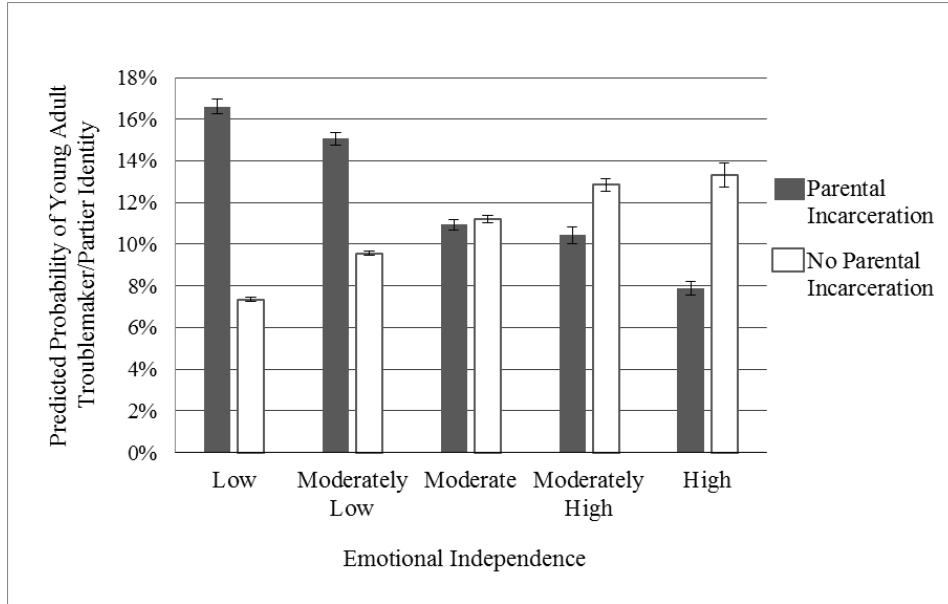


Figure 1. Predicted Probability of Young Adult Troublemaker/Partier Identity (with 95% Confidence Intervals) by Parental Incarceration and Emotional Independence (based on Model 3 in Table 2)