Fatherhood and Desistance from Offending: The Role of Coresidency with Children

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Background and Prior Research
• Many studies have shown that motherhood is a significant turning point in favor of desistance.
• Few studies have provided quantitative analyses depicting how fathers fare in their attempts to desist.
• Research on outcomes for fathers has been qualitative, focused on attitudes and beliefs about the fatherhood role.
• Incarcerated fathers cited the need to "make it" for their children as the primary motivation to better their lives (Shannon and Abrams 2007).
• Fathers' engagement decreases criminality and economic disadvantage in low SES families (Buston 2005).
• Highly disadvantaged young men and women are not as likely to demonstrate desistance after becoming parents, especially with fewer years of education and lower occupation levels (Peers et al. 2003; Giordano et al. 2011).
• Cultural and historical factors contribute to racial differences in father engagement; those who have been incarcerated and less likely to establish paternity are more likely to be Black than White or Hispanic (Siswick and Washington 2000; Casterline 2000).
• Those who cohabit with a significant other have higher levels of involvement (Volker 2013).

The Present Study
• Much speculation exists for the multitude of factors that might affect the degree of desistance for fathers.
• This study aims to evaluate the importance of fatherhood on criminal desistance.
• Residency status and fatherhood are predicted to have a significant impact on the degree to which male offenders desist.

Data and Measures
• The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)
• All four waves of Add Health are utilized (Waves I/II/III/IV).
• The sample consists of males who reported committing a criminal offense (violent, non-violent, or both) in either of Waves I and II (n = 7,235).
• Dependent variable: desistance.
  - Criminal desistance is comprised of persisters, temporary desisters, and desisters.
  - There are three different types of offending:
    1. Violent: Robbery, Aggravated Assault, and Assault
    2. Non-violent: Drug Use, Theft, and Larceny
    3. Non-fathers, Non-resident fathers, and Resident fathers
• Focal independent variables: fatherhood and residency.
  - (1) non-fathers, (2) non-resident fathers, and (3) resident fathers

Persistence and Desistance from Adolescence to Young Adulthood

Summary of Findings
Non-fathers are significantly more likely to:
• Persist compared to resident fathers.
• Have a higher SES than both resident and non-resident fathers.
• Grow up with both biological parents than resident and non-resident fathers.
• Be younger than both resident and non-resident fathers.
• Have an Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or higher compared to non-resident fathers.
• Have a high school degree compared to resident fathers.
• Be single than both resident and non-resident fathers.

Non-resident fathers are significantly more likely to:
• Temporarily desist compared to non-fathers.
• Grow up in a family structure without both biological parents.
• Have no degree compared to resident fathers.

Resident fathers are significantly more likely to:
• Desist compared to non-resident fathers.
• Have a higher SES than non-resident fathers.
• Work more hours compared to both non-fathers and non-resident fathers.
• Be married than both non-fathers and non-resident fathers.

Descriptive Statistics

Conclusion and Next Steps
• Resident fathers seem to have the advantage when it comes to desistance:
  - Compared to both non-fathers and non-resident fathers, resident fathers are less likely to persist.
  - Non-resident fathers are more likely to desist temporarily.
  - Resident fathers are far more likely to desist than non-resident fathers.
• Multivariate regression analyses are in progress, which will show outcomes of various interactions between variables that might be favorable to desistance.

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