Vermont’s Carceral Children

A Predictive Data Analysis of Contact between Incarcerated Parents and their Children in Vermont

It has been shown that increased contact between incarcerated parents and their children decreases rates of recidivism for the inmates, and decreases the likelihood of the children being incarcerated themselves. Little else is known about the relationship between inmates and their children, particularly in the ways that the inmate’s incarceration effects their role as a parent. Less is known about this information at the Vermont state level, as this is the first of such a survey conducted in Vermont, and this analysis is the first done on that data. A survey was conducted in 2013 in which inmates in all of Vermont’s prisons (n=418) were asked questions relating to themselves and their children. Compound indicators were created based on past, current, and future involvement/contact with their children. These indicators were first examined independently for differences between them, and then crosstabulated against variables indicating the parent’s demography, information on their incarceration, and housing information of both the children and themselves prior to incarceration, to test for meaningful relationships. Preliminary analysis shows that, in Vermont, males have less contact prior to and during incarceration than females, current contact varies directly with past contact at all times, the length of the inmate’s incarceration varies indirectly with current contact, being incarcerated at a younger age increases current contact, and that white people have much less contact (if any at all) with their children before, during, and (expected) after incarceration than other races. Further analysis will need to be done to uncover the nature of these interactions, as well as possible other interactions. With this data, it may be possible to influence a change in legislature, aimed at changing policy in correctional facilities to improve contact between inmates and their children.