



Invisible Victims of Crime or Future Offenders? How the Ideals of Neoliberalism and Risk are Shaping Perceptions of Prisoner's Children Within Australia.

Natasha Graham

La Trobe University

Children with a parent in prison have been described as both invisible victims of crime and as being at significant risk of future offending. The former relates to the lack of acknowledgement they receive within social, political and legal realms. The latter as a result of extensive research suggesting that crime and criminal behaviour can be passed on from one generation to the next. Risk factors such as poverty and genetic susceptibility align perfectly with the ideals of neoliberalism, placing the responsibility for criminal behaviour on the shoulders of families to which such children belong. This is achieved at the expense of other important factors, such as rigid political policy and social exclusion, which can also contribute to criminal behaviour. Hill and Hindmarsh (2006) contend that any human behaviour is embedded within the social, political and cultural context in which it originates and occurs. Therefore, I would argue that current intergenerational and risk factor research fails to take into account the broader social and structural inequality experienced by prisoner's children. Furthermore, the reductionist nature of contemporary research significantly limits our understanding of these children including their propensity for future offending.