

PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND RECIDIVISM: INVESTIGATING THE  
MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS OF CHANCES FOR SUCCESS IN JUVENILE  
OFFENDERS

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## ABSTRACT

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Youth crime is a significant problem in the United States, and the link between youth delinquency and future adult criminal behavior is well documented (Kalist, Lee, & Spurr, 2015; Paternoster, Brame, & Farrington, 2001). Theories and previous research of perceptions of the legal system indicate that individuals who view interactions with the legal system as respectful and legal decision-making procedures as fair are more likely to comply with the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 1997). Youths' perceptions of chances for success (Menard & Elliott, 1996) may be linked to both perceptions of the legal system and recidivism, as youths' perceptions of legal institutions have been linked to their expectations about their own behavior (Lane, Lanza-Kaduce, Frazier, & Bishop, 2002; Schubert, Mulvey, Loughran, & Losoya, 2012), and youths' perceptions of chances for success have been connected with offending (Iselin, Mulvey, Loughran, Chung, & Schubert, 2012). Because it is well documented that racial and ethnic groups differ in their involvement with the justice system (McNulty & Bellair, 2003), perceptions of the police and legal system (Lee, Steinberg, Piquero, & Knight, 2011; Reitzel & Piquero, 2006), and general perception of future success (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997), ethnicity may play a role in the relations between these constructs. Using a sample of serious juvenile offenders, the current study examined relations between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism, exploring the roles of perceptions of chances for success as a mediator and ethnicity as a moderator. The results indicate that, in Black and Hispanic juvenile

offenders, but not White, perceptions of chances for success mediates the relation between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism, providing the first analysis of a model examining perceptions of chances for success in the relation between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism. The current study offers support for the suggestion that interventions aimed at preventing youth from engaging in illegal behaviors may need to be tailored to target ethnic-specific attitudes and foster beliefs in ethnic minority youth that they are capable of future success.

**KEY WORDS:** Perceptions of procedural justice, Legal legitimacy, Legal cynicism, Perceptions of chances for success, Recidivism, Adolescent, Juvenile offender

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Youth crime is a significant problem in the United States, as youth violence is the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012). However, death resulting from youth violence is only part of the problem, as youth violence can also affect the health of communities by increasing health care costs and disrupting social services (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). For example, the CDC (2012) estimates that youth homicides and assault-related injuries lead to \$16 billion in medical and work loss costs each year. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), there is no national estimate of juvenile recidivism—the rate of repetition of criminal behavior—because juvenile justice systems differ across states (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). However, in 2009, juveniles accounted for 15% and 24% of all arrests for violent crime and property crime, respectively (Puzzanchera & Adams, 2011), and the link between youth delinquency and adult criminal behavior is well documented (Kalist et al., 2015; Paternoster et al., 2001). For instance, in a prospective study of adjudicated delinquent youth, Colman and colleagues (2009) found that juvenile offense history was associated with an increased risk for adult antisocial behavior, with a vast majority of the juvenile offenders included in the study becoming involved in the adult criminal justice system as well. Given these negative outcomes of youth violence and recidivism, the broad aim of this study is to further analyze the factors that affect juvenile recidivism, specifically examining youth's perceptions of the legal system and chances for success in the context of ethnicity. Particularly, the proposed study examines three aspects of youth's

perceptions of the legal system—perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism—as predictors of recidivism, in addition to exploring perceived chances of success as a mediator and ethnicity as a moderator.

### **Perceptions of the legal system: Procedural justice, legitimacy, & legal cynicism**

Perceptions of the legal system, in the proposed study, are operationalized as including perceptions of procedural justice and the underlying norms—legitimacy and legal cynicism. In general, perceptions of procedural justice have been found to impact individuals' satisfaction with legal outcomes. Specifically, perceptions of procedural justice are an individual's perceptions of fairness and equity connected with arrest and court processing (Tyler, 1997). Evidence suggests that everyday experiences with the police and courts influence citizens and their attitudes, such that those who have unsatisfactory experiences with authority figures tend to also have negative impressions of those authorities (Tyler, 1984). Some theories suggest that these attitudes stem from the outcomes of previous encounters, assuming that an individual who dislikes a prior sentencing decision then evaluates the courtroom experience negatively (Tyler, 1984). However, other theories indicate that individuals' evaluations depend upon the process by which the decisions are made (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). In fact, research has found that individuals' evaluations of court processes and experiences (i.e., perceptions of procedural justice) greatly influence their satisfaction with the outcome of the case, regardless of the sentence severity (Casper, Tyler, & Fisher, 1988; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler, 1984, 1990, 1997). According to this perspective, individuals are more concerned with whether they receive a legal outcome through a fair procedure rather than with the outcome itself (Tyler, 1990).

Perceptions of procedural justice have also been linked with compliance with the law. Theories and previous research of perceptions of procedural justice indicate that individuals who perceive encounters with authorities as respectful and decision-making procedures as fair are more likely to comply with the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Paternoster et al., 1997; Penner et al., 2014; Tyler, 1997). For example, using a sample of adult spousal assault suspects, Paternoster and colleagues (1997) found that the suspects' evaluation of the use of fair procedures on the part of police officers was associated with reduced subsequent violence. Conversely, other research has found that when police are evaluated as behaving unfairly, individuals are less likely to cooperate with them (McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Parks, 1999). In youth, research investigating the impact of perceptions of procedural justice on recidivism has found that procedural justice may affect rates of subsequent offending (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Penner et al., 2014). Specifically, in a study of youth on probation, Penner and colleagues (2014) found that youths' perceptions of procedural justice inversely predicted self-reported offending at a 3-month time point even after controlling for other risk factors—psychopathy scores, substance use, and age at first arrest—such that perceived procedural justice predicted reduced recidivism three months later. In addition, Penner and colleagues (2014) found that procedural justice was significantly and inversely predictive of self-reported offending frequency. However, Penner and colleagues (2014) also found that perceptions of procedural justice were not related to the frequency of official offending, perhaps due in part to the differences between self-reported offending and official offending, nor was it related to any offending variables at 6-months. While these results indicate that youths who perceive the justice system as fair may be at lower risk of



reoffending (at least based on self-report), future research is necessary to further elucidate these relations and resolve discrepant findings.

Closely linked to perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy and cynicism are two other important aspects of perceptions of the legal system. Legitimacy refers to an individual's feelings of obligation to obey the rules and decisions associated with legal institutions and authorities, even when those rules or decisions are viewed as wrong (Piquero et al., 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Legal cynicism, however, refers to the belief that laws or rules are not considered binding and that acting in ways that are outside the law is reasonable (Piquero et al., 2005). In general, individuals have views about the legitimacy of authorities that are based upon their social interactions and experiences as well as their perceptions of those experiences (Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg, & Odgers, 2005). Fagan and Tyler (2005) theorize that individuals who perceive fair treatment in legal interactions view laws and legal authorities as legitimate and moral. As a result, the individual's perceptions of procedural justice (and their actual legal interactions) help shape their legal socialization—their perceptions of legal legitimacy and cynicism (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2005). Fagan and Tyler (2005) describe the process of legal socialization, and thus the development of legal legitimacy and cynicism, as an individual's personal evaluation of society's rules and means of law enforcement.

Theories of legal socialization explain that adolescence is a time when legal legitimacy and cynicism develop (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et al., 2005). In fact, Fagan and Tyler (2005) found that, in a sample of community children and adolescents, procedural justice was a significant predictor of legal socialization, indicating that how

children perceive their and others' legal interactions shapes their evaluations of the legal system in general. Therefore, as youth observe the justice system and develop perceptions about it through their own experiences or the experiences of others, they develop specific views of legal legitimacy and cynicism (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Fine et al., 2016; Tyler, 2006; Tyler, 1990). In addition, developmental trends show that legal socialization changes over time such that perceptions of legitimacy decline with age and cynicism grows over time (Fagan & Tyler, 2005). As a result, the emergence of perceptions of legal legitimacy and cynicism in adolescence makes this period an important stage for further research.

Theories of legal legitimacy and cynicism suggest that not only is adolescence a time when attitudes toward the legal system begin to develop but that legal legitimacy and cynicism may shape both adolescent and adult law-related behaviors, such as future compliance with the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Penner et al., 2014). Similar to research suggesting that perceptions of procedural justice are an important predictor of recidivism, further research indicates that legal legitimacy and cynicism may also predict and ultimately affect individuals' compliance with the law (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Penner, Viljoen, Douglas, & Roesch, 2014; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014; Tyler, 1990, 1997; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Existing research in youth is limited, but has found that legal legitimacy is a significant predictor of self-reported delinquency in a sample of community children and adolescents, such that poorer evaluations of the legitimacy of the police and courts were associated with higher scores of delinquency (Fagan & Tyler, 2005). These findings have been echoed in research on juvenile offenders as well. Specifically, Cavanagh and Cauffman (2015) found that decreased perceptions of legal system legitimacy predicted

increased youth reoffending one year after the youths' first arrest. In addition, while procedural justice was found to influence youth offending, its effects were mediated by legitimacy (Fagan & Piquero, 2007). Conversely, Penner and colleagues (2014) found that while procedural justice and legitimacy are related, legal legitimacy beliefs did not mediate the relation between procedural justice and offending. Furthermore, legal cynicism was found to directly influence youth offending (Fagan & Piquero, 2007). Overall, these studies indicate a need for further research on the links between perceptions of the legal system and offending in youth.

### **Perceived chances of success**

These disparate findings suggest that we do not yet fully understand how perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism contribute to youth's offending patterns. One construct that may be linked to perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism and recidivism is the youths' attitudes—in particular, the youths' perceptions of chances for success or perceptions of opportunity. Perceptions of chances for success are the youths' predictions of his/her future adult accomplishment, specifically his/her desire and expectations for achievement in several areas, including expectations for work, family, and law-abiding behavior (Menard & Elliott, 1996). However, the literature on perceptions of success is limited, and the term is often used interchangeably with “possible selves.” In general, youths' experiences in correctional institutions of various types have been linked to their expectations about their own behavior (Lane et al., 2002; Schubert et al., 2012). For example, Lane and colleagues (2002) found that adolescents' differentially assessed the expected impact of various types of correctional placements (i.e., low-end juvenile, deep-end juvenile, and

adult sanctions) on their future offending behaviors after release. Similarly, Marsh and Evans (2009) discovered that youths' perceptions' about their relationships with staff in correctional settings were related to their predictions about future success. Although no study specifically links perceptions of the legal system (i.e., perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism) to perceptions of chances for success, these studies demonstrate that adolescents' experiences within the legal system are related to their perceptions of future outcomes and opportunity.

Furthermore, these perceptions of future opportunities have been linked with recidivism and offending (Iselin et al., 2012). Adolescents need images of the kind of life they want to have and ideas about which behaviors will bring them closest to succeeding in order to remove the current childhood-self in favor of a future-oriented adult-self (Iselin, Mulvey, Loughran, Chung, & Schubert, 2012; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Theories on the notion of possible selves suggest that individuals change their behavior over time to correspond with images of the person they want to become and to avoid the person they fear becoming in the future (Markus & Ruvolo, 1989). Research has suggested that delinquent youth may not have the expectations or aspirations to achieve non-delinquent possible selves (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Further, research has postulated that it is the balance between having the aspirations to achieve a goal and the fear of what may happen if the goal is not accomplished that provides the most motivation for taking action (Iselin et al., 2012; Oyserman & Saltz, 1993; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). In fact, Oyserman and Markus (1990) found that the balance between expected possible selves and feared possible selves might be related to delinquency in youth, as more delinquent youth demonstrated less balanced perceptions. Oyserman and

Markus (1990) noted that delinquent youth showed a lack of balance typically because they were unable to describe an expected possible self. In other words, more delinquent youth were able to describe a feared self (i.e., fear of becoming a criminal), but they struggled to describe an expected possible self that may serve as a vision of how they can avoid criminal activity (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Therefore, perceptions of future success may be essential to foster positive behaviors. In general, Iselin and colleagues (2012) found that there was a trend of youth with both aspirations of law-abiding behavior as well as expectations of law-abiding behavior and fewer offending behaviors later. In fact, adolescents' higher ratings of expectations of staying out of trouble, as well as higher ratings of the importance of staying out of trouble with the law, predicted fewer offending behaviors several months later (Iselin et al., 2012). As a result, it may be important to foster beliefs in youth that he/she is capable of staying out of trouble with the law as it may make it more likely that the youth would then avoid engaging in illegal behaviors (Iselin et al., 2012). Together, these studies indicate that perceptions of the justice system—including perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism—may have an impact on recidivism and offending and that perceptions of chances for success or opportunity may serve to link perceptions of the justice system to reoffending.

### **Moderating role of ethnicity**

It is well documented that racial and ethnic groups are differentially involved in the justice system (McNulty & Bellair, 2003). Research indicates that Black youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system at a ratio of more than 3 to 1 when considering their representation in the population (Davis & Sorensen, 2013), and Black

youth are more vulnerable to police contacts than are Hispanic youth, who are more at risk than Whites (Fine & Cauffman, 2015; Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005). Moreover, the lifetime risk of being arrested and incarcerated for Black and Hispanic males is much higher than it is for White males (Blumstein & Graddy, 1981; Piquero & Brame, 2008), and the rates of involvement in serious violence are higher for Blacks than Whites (Morenoff, 2005). Furthermore, in a study examining racial and ethnic differences in serious adolescent violence, McNulty and Bellair (2003) found that Black, Hispanic, and Native American adolescents reported significantly higher involvement in serious violence than White adolescents. In addition, Fine and Cauffman (2015) reported that Black youth come into disproportionate contact with the justice system despite engaging in the same level of offending. As a result, racial/ethnic groups likely differ in their interactions with the legal system.

It is also well documented that racial and ethnic groups differ in their perceptions of the legal system, with Blacks typically holding more negative views (Lee, Steinberg, Piquero, & Knight, 2011; Reitzel & Piquero, 2006). One study that examined the trajectories of legitimacy and legal cynicism in a sample of adolescent offenders found that being Black was not associated with a particular trajectory of legal cynicism, but Blacks were more likely to have the most negative perceptions of police legitimacy (Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg, & Odgers, 2005). Furthermore, in a study examining the links between ethnic identity, perceptions of the police, and offending among Black juvenile offenders, Lee and colleagues (2011) found that higher ethnic identity exploration was related to positive perceptions of legitimacy and lower legal cynicism; and more negative perceptions of police legitimacy and higher legal cynicism were

associated with more self-reported offending. Moreover, research from Fine and Cauffman (2015) found that Black youth view the justice system as the least legitimate and most cynically, followed by Latino youth and then White youth, suggesting that youths' perceptions of the legal system vary by ethnicity. Taken together, these results indicate that ethnicity may play a role in the relation between procedural justice and recidivism.

Previous research has indicated that ethnic differences may also exist in individuals' general perception of chances for success. Researchers have examined the role that perceived barriers play in the career decision-making process, finding that high school and college students perceive a substantial number of barriers to educational and career goal attainment (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Furthermore, college students differed in their perceptions of barriers to their goals such that ethnic minority students indicated greater perceived barriers than White students indicate, and they also demonstrated lower self-efficacy for handling those barriers (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). In a sample of high school students, McWhirter (1997) found that Mexican-American students anticipated more educational and career barriers than Euro-Americans. In addition, Kao (2000) used interviews and focus groups with high school students to investigate racial differences in the development of possible selves among adolescents. Kao (2000) found that while students had similar educational aspirations, their understandings of their aspirations differed along racial/ethnic lines. For example, Black youth discussed goals in terms of avoiding failure, whereas Hispanic youth sought to avoid manual labor (Kao, 2000). Similarly, Stevenson (2012) used discussion groups to examine ethnic/racial differences in college students' views of their future possible

selves. Stevenson (2012) noted that while all students aimed for high academic achievement, there were group differences in the similarity between hoped for and true possible selves and their views of what their “ought to” selves should look like. For instance, White students had greater congruence between their hoped for and true possible selves than the other racial groups. In addition, Stevenson (2012) found that Black male students in particular described themselves in very negative ways, seemingly expressing internalized negative stereotypes associated with their ethnic group of failure and underperformance. While these studies do not directly measure perceptions of chances for success, they indicate that ethnic groups differ in their views of future achievement and the likelihood for achievement. Still, little research has examined any racial/ethnic differences amongst the relations between youth’s perceptions of procedural justice, perceptions of chances for success, and recidivism.

### **The current study**

Against this background, the current study aimed to examine relations between perceptions of the legal system as three independent variables: perceptions of procedural justice, legal cynicism, and legal legitimacy; a proposed mediator: perceptions of chances for success; and one dependent variable: recidivism, in a sample of serious juvenile offenders. Furthermore, the potential moderating role of ethnicity was explored, given the documented racial/ethnic differences in perceptions of the legal system. To this end, we examined several moderated mediational models. We hypothesized that juvenile offenders who did not recidivate at 6 month follow-up would demonstrate (a) increased positive perceptions of procedural justice, (b) increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and (c) decreased legal cynicism compared with those who recidivated, and that



increased perceptions of chances for success would mediate the relation between these independent variables and recidivism, such that youth who endorse increased positive perceptions of procedural justice, increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and decreased legal cynicism would also endorse more positive perceptions of chances for success and thus not recidivate. Because it is well documented that racial and ethnic groups are differentially involved in the justice system (McNulty & Bellair, 2003), differ in their perceptions of the police and legal system (Lee et al., 2011; Reitzel & Piquero, 2006), and differ in their perception of future success (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997), we expected ethnicity to moderate the relations between perceptions of the legal system—including perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism—perceptions of chances for success, and recidivism. Specifically, because racial discrimination and the perception of discrimination has been associated decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy in youth and thus increased offending (Sanders-Phillips, Settles-Reaves, Walker, & Brownlow, 2009), we expected ethnicity to moderate the relation between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism. In particular, negative perceptions of the legal system may be a result of perceived discrimination that ultimately leads to internalized racism—the internalization of racist attitudes towards members of one’s own ethnic group, including oneself—which decrease perceptions of chances for success and increases offending behavior. As a result, we expected a significant relation between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism for minority youth (e.g., Black, Hispanic) rather than White youth. By improving our understanding of youth offenders’ perceptions of the legal system and of their future

success, we may be able to deter adolescents from delinquency during this critical period of development.

## CHAPTER II

### Methods

#### Participants

All subjects in this study were participants in the *Pathways to Desistance* project, a longitudinal study of serious juvenile offenders from Philadelphia and Phoenix (Schubert et al., 2004). A total of 1,354 juvenile offenders ages 14-19 ( $M = 16.04$ ) were enrolled at baseline. Of these participants, 86% were male, 20% White, 41% Black, 34% Hispanic, and 5% Other. Youth were chosen for possible enrollment after a review of court files in each location found that they had been adjudicated of a serious offense. Eligible crimes included all felony offenses with the exception of less serious property crimes, as well as misdemeanor weapons offenses and misdemeanor sexual assault. Because drug offenses constitute a large proportion of all offenses committed by youth, and the vast majority of youth who are charged with drug offenses are typically males, the study introduced a capped proportion of males with drug offenses to 15% of the sample at each site. All females who met the age and crime requirements were eligible for enrollment regardless of whether the charged crime was a drug offense.

The present study used the semi-annual data collected from baseline through the 6-month data collection point for a total of two time points. As a result, the present analyses used data from youth who completed interviews at baseline and 6-months. At the 6-month follow-up, 89 youth did not complete the full follow-up battery, and 21 youth only completed part of the battery. In addition, youth who were not classified as White, Black, or Hispanic were excluded from analyses ( $N = 59$ ), leaving a total of 1,185 juvenile offenders with complete data at the 6-month follow-up. Therefore, the present

analyses consisted of 1,185 youth ages 14-20. Of these, 87% were male, 22% White, 43% Black, and 35% Hispanic. The average age of the youth was 16 at baseline and 16.5 at 6-month follow-up. 58% of the juvenile offenders included were labeled as having recidivated at the 6-month follow-up.

## **Materials**

**Demographics.** Descriptive characteristics of the participants were collected at each time point during the study using questions developed by the Pathways Study investigators. Data collected included ethnicity, subject age, age at first offense, gender, and family characteristics. Specifically, as a result of the subjects' self-reported ethnicity, six ethnic groups were created: White, Black, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, Other. However, ethnicity was recoded and collapsed into four groups—White, Black, Hispanic, and Other—due to the low frequencies in the Asian, Native American, and Other groups. The Other group was not included in analyses due to the limited number of youth in this category compared to other categories and the heterogeneity of within this group.

**Perceptions of the legal system.** This construct was operationalized in three ways for the current study. The three following measures were used in study analyses.

***Perceptions of procedural justice.*** The Procedural Justice inventory was adapted for the Pathways study from the work of Tyler (1997), and it measures adolescents' perceptions of fairness and equity connected with arrest and court processing. The inventory consists of 38 items divided into two sections: police and judge. Items tap direct contact (e.g., "During my last encounter with the police, they treated me the way I thought I should be treated;" "During my last encounter with the judge, s/he treated me the way that I expected s/he would treat me.") as well as indirect contact (e.g., "Of the

people you know who have had a contact with the police (in terms of crime accusation), how much of their story did the police let them tell;” “Of the people you know who have had contact with the courts (in terms of crime accusation), how much did the judge let them tell their side of the story?”). Participants rated a majority of the items on a five-point Likert-type scale (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree). However, a few items (e.g., “Of the people you know who have had a contact with the police (in terms of crime accusation), how much of their story did the police let them tell?”) were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (All of it, Most of it, Some of it, None of it) and then converted to a five-point Likert scale. The mean of the nineteen items was used to measure participants’ perceptions of police treatment (a combination of procedural justice scales for police-direct experience,  $\alpha = .74$ , and procedural justice scales for police-others’ experience,  $\alpha = .57$ ), and the mean of the other nineteen items was used to measure participants’ perceptions of court proceedings (a combination of procedural justice scales in court-direct experience,  $\alpha = .75$ , and procedural justice scales in court-others’ experience,  $\alpha = .66$ ). However, if the participant did not have any contact with the courts, the court section was computed as the mean of the eight items addressing indirect contact with the courts.

***Legal legitimacy.*** The measure of legal legitimacy used in this study follows from measures used by Tyler (1997) and Tyler and Huo (2002) and evaluates individual’s feelings of obligation to obey the rules and decisions associated with legal institutions and authorities. Using a four-point Likert-type scale (Strongly disagree, Somewhat disagree, Somewhat agree, Strongly agree), participants indicated their agreement with 11 statements related to opinions of legal proceedings and agents (e.g., “I feel proud of

the police” and “Court decisions here are almost always fair.”). The mean of these items was used in analyses, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived legitimacy of the law. Psychometric analysis of this scale at baseline indicated  $\alpha = .80$ .

***Legal cynicism.*** The legal cynicism scale was adapted from Sampson and Bartusch (1998), who developed the items by modifying Srole’s (1956) scale. Overall, this scale measures individuals’ beliefs that laws or rules are not considered binding and that acting in ways that are outside the law is reasonable. Using a four-point Likert-type scale (Strongly disagree, Somewhat disagree, Somewhat agree, Strongly agree), participants indicated their agreement with five statements (e.g., “Laws are meant to be broken” and “It is okay to do anything you want.”). The mean of these items was used in analyses, with higher scores indicating higher levels of legal cynicism. Psychometric analysis of this scale at baseline indicated  $\alpha = .60$ .

***Perceptions of chances for success.*** The Perceptions of Chances for Success measure used was adapted for the Pathways study from the questions used in the National Youth Survey – Prediction of Adult Success (Elliot, 1990; Elliott, Huizinga, & Menard, 1998; Menard & Elliott, 1996). This measure assesses individuals’ beliefs about his/her future success, specifically the importance and expectations of accomplishing goals. Specifically, this measure contains items that assess the adolescent’s expectations for work, family, and law-abiding behavior (e.g., “What do you think your chances are to earn a good living?”). Participants used a five-point Likert-type scale to indicate expectations (Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent). The mean of these items was used in analyses, with higher scores indicating greater optimism regarding success. Psychometric analysis of the expectations scale at baseline indicated  $\alpha = .81$ .

**Recidivism.** A Self-Reported Offending questionnaire (SRO; Huizinga, Esbensen, & Weiher, 1991) was adapted for the Pathways study in order to measure the youths' account of their involvement in different types of crime. The SRO consists of 22-items such as, "Destroyed/damaged property" and "Shot someone." The measure of recidivism in the current study was a dichotomous variable, with youth classified as having recidivated or having not recidivated during the 6-month follow-up period.

### **Procedure**

Informed consent was obtained from the juveniles and their parents or guardians. Eligible youth, who agreed to participate in the study, and whose parents provided consent, then completed baseline assessments. Subjects were assessed at 6-month intervals through the 84-month data collection point for a total of 11 repeated observations. Data were collected with computer-assisted interviews that took place in the participants' homes, in libraries (or other public places), or in facilities. Trained interviewers read each item aloud, and to ensure privacy, subjects could select to enter their responses on a keypad out of the interviewer's view. All attempts were made to preserve privacy, and honest reporting was encouraged by the assurance of confidentiality protections provided by statute to the Department of Justice.

## CHAPTER III

### Results

Means and standard deviations of age at first offense, perceptions of the legal system, legal legitimacy, legal cynicism, and perceptions of chances for success for all offenders, as well as comparisons between those who recidivated and those who did not are presented in Table 1. Independent-samples *t*-tests and chi-square tests were conducted to compare those who recidivated and those who did not on the variables of interest. Significant differences between those who recidivated and those who did not were found for age at first offense, procedural justice—police, legal legitimacy, legal cynicism, and perceptions of chances for success (see Table 1). A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between gender and recidivism. The percentage of youth that recidivated differed by gender,  $\chi^2(1, N = 1185) = 0.12.72, p < .01$  with 60% of males recidivating and 50% of females recidivating. There was also a significant difference in perceptions of procedural justice—judge for males ( $M = 3.15, SD = 0.53$ ) and females ( $M = 3.28, SD = 0.50$ );  $t(1183) = -2.96, p = .003$ , legal cynicism for males ( $M = 2.06, SD = 0.61$ ) and females ( $M = 1.84, SD = 0.58$ );  $t(1183) = 4.33, p < .01$ , and legal legitimacy for males ( $M = 2.23, SD = 0.56$ ) and females ( $M = 2.40, SD = 0.61$ );  $t(1183) = -2.52, p = .012$ . Due to the significant differences between males and females for many study variables, gender was entered as a covariate in subsequent analyses.



Table 1

*Means and standard deviations of study variables*

	Recidivism				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Total	
	Did recidivate		Did not recidivate				M	SD
	M	SD	M	SD				
Age at first offense	10.11	1.56	10.89	2.02	7.22	< .01	10.44	1.81
Procedural justice – police	2.75	0.51	2.82	0.52	2.41	.02	2.78	0.52
Procedural justice – judge	3.14	0.51	3.19	0.55	1.59	.11	3.16	0.53
Legal legitimacy	2.24	0.54	2.37	0.59	3.87	< .01	2.30	0.57
Legal cynicism	2.09	0.62	1.95	0.60	-3.88	< .01	2.03	0.61
Perceptions of chances for success	3.34	0.80	3.53	0.82	4.06	< .01	3.42	0.81

Bivariate correlations between age at first offense, perceptions of the legal system, legal legitimacy, legal cynicism, perceptions of chances for success, and recidivism are presented in Table 2. Age at first offense was significantly related to all variables of interest and, thus, it was entered as a covariate in subsequent analyses. Correlations indicated positive relations between perceptions of procedural justice—police, perceptions of procedural justice—judge, legal legitimacy, and perceptions of chances for success. In addition, correlations indicated negative relations between legal cynicism and perceptions of chances for success.

Table 2

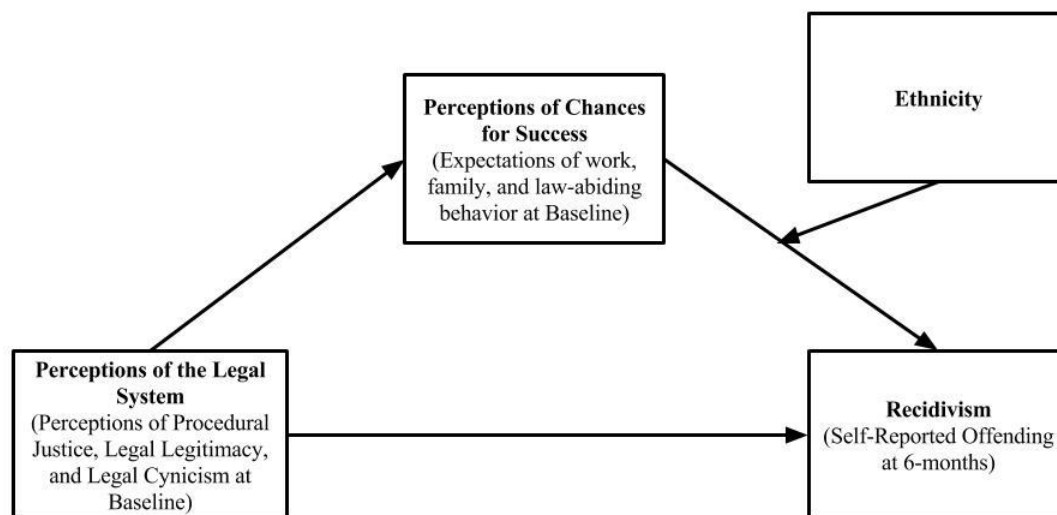
*Correlations between key study variables*

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age at first offense	---					
2. Procedural justice – Police	0.14**	---				
3. Procedural justice – judge	0.08**	0.53**	---			
4. Legal legitimacy	0.14**	0.53**	0.52**	---		
5. Legal cynicism	-0.08**	-0.10**	-0.10**	-0.21**	---	
6. Perceptions of chances for success	0.10**	0.09**	0.08**	0.16**	-0.21**	---

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$

In order to examine the relations between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism, taking into consideration the role of perceptions of chances for success as a mediator and the potential role of ethnicity as a moderator, a series of four moderated-mediation models were conducted. In all models, age at first offense and gender were entered as covariates in order to statistically control for the age of the offender's first offense and gender of the offender, known risk factors for recidivism (Blumstein & Graddy, 1981; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001; Elliott et al., 2012; Moffitt, 1993; Mulder, Brand, Bullens, & van Marle, 2011) and covariates identified at the bivariate level. In all models, recidivism (at 6-month follow-up) was used as the dependent variable, ethnicity was examined as a moderator, and perceptions of chances

for success was examined as a mediator. Each of the four models tested differed only with regard to the perceptions of the legal system independent variable: (1) perception of procedural justice (police and court scores entered as two independent variables separately), (2) legal legitimacy, and (3) legal cynicism. The PROCESS SPSS (Model 14) computational tool (Hayes, 2013) using bootstrap procedures was used to estimate the significance of direct, indirect (mediational), and conditional indirect effects (moderated mediation) on recidivism. These four models examined whether (a) perceptions of the legal system (i.e., procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism) had significant direct effects on recidivism (at 6-month follow-up), (b) whether perception of chances for success mediated the relation between perceptions of the legal system (i.e., perceptions of procedural justice, legal legitimacy, and legal cynicism) and recidivism, (3) whether the association between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism was moderated by ethnicity, and if (4) the strength of the hypothesized indirect (mediation) effect was conditional on the level of the moderator (ethnicity). The model is presented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* Model of moderated mediation. Model of perceptions for success as a mediator of perceptions of the legal system and recidivism with ethnicity moderating the relation between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism.

In the first model, perceptions of procedural justice—police served as the independent variable, recidivism served as the dependent variable, and perception of chances for success was the mediator, with ethnicity serving as a moderator of the relation between perception of chances for success and recidivism. Perceptions of procedural justice—police was significantly associated with increased perceptions of chances for success ( $b = .13, SE = .05, p < .01$ ). Neither perceptions of procedural justice—police ( $b = -.15, SE = .12, p = .22$ ) nor perceptions of chances for success ( $b = .21, SE = .24, p = .38$ ) were directly associated with recidivism. However, a significant interaction between perceptions of chances for success and ethnicity ( $b = -.21, SE = .37, p = .045$ ) was noted, such that perceptions of chances for success made a significant contribution to the prediction of recidivism in Black youth ( $B = -.28, SE = .11,$

$p = .01$ ) and Hispanic youth ( $B = -.45$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but not in White youth ( $B = -.02$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p = .90$ ). Additionally, conditional indirect effects of perceptions of procedural justice—police on recidivism revealed that the indirect and negative effect of perceptions of procedural justice—police on recidivism through perception of chances for success was moderated by ethnicity, such that a significant mediation was observed in Black ( $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.074--.007$ ) and Hispanic ( $b = -.05$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.111--.014$ ) youth but not in White youth ( $b = -.01$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.051--.016$ ), indicating a significant moderated mediation with regard to perceptions of procedural justice—police for recidivism.

In the second model, perceptions of procedural justice—judge served as the independent variable, recidivism served as the dependent variable, and perception of chances for success was the mediator, with ethnicity serving as a moderator of the relation between perception of chances for success and recidivism. Perceptions of procedural justice—judge were significantly associated with increased perceptions of chances for success ( $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p = .02$ ). Neither perceptions of procedural justice—judge ( $b = -.08$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p = .47$ ) nor perceptions of chances for success ( $b = .20$ ,  $SE = .24$ ,  $p = .40$ ) were significantly associated with recidivism. However, a significant interaction between perceptions of chances for success and ethnicity ( $b = -.21$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p = .05$ ) was noted as described previously. Additionally, conditional indirect effects of perceptions of procedural justice—judge on recidivism revealed that the indirect and negative effect of perceptions of procedural justice—judge on recidivism through perception of chances for success was moderated by ethnicity, such that a significant mediation was observed in Black ( $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.062--.005$ ) and

Hispanic ( $b = -.04$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.103--.010$ ) youth but not in White youth ( $b = -.01$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.047--.012$ ), indicating a significant moderated mediation with regard to perceptions of procedural justice—judge for recidivism.

In the third model, legal legitimacy served as the independent variable, recidivism served as the dependent variable, and perception of chances for success was the mediator, with ethnicity serving as a moderator of the relation between perception of chances for success and recidivism. Legal legitimacy was significantly associated with increased perceptions of chances for success ( $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Like previous models, perceptions of chances for success were not significantly associated with recidivism ( $b = .24$ ,  $SE = .24$ ,  $p = .33$ ). However, increased legal legitimacy was significantly associated with decreased recidivism ( $b = -.26$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p = .02$ ). In addition, a significant interaction between perceptions of chances for success and ethnicity ( $b = -.21$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p = .04$ ) was noted as previously described. Furthermore, conditional indirect effects of legal legitimacy on recidivism revealed that the indirect and negative effect of legal legitimacy on recidivism through perception of chances for success was moderated by ethnicity, such that a significant mediation was observed in Black ( $b = -.05$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.090--.014$ ) and Hispanic ( $b = -.08$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.142--.035$ ) youth but not in White youth ( $b = -.01$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $CI_{95}: -.070--.031$ ), indicating a significant moderated mediation with regard to legal legitimacy for recidivism.

In the fourth model, legal cynicism served as the independent variable, recidivism served as the dependent variable, and perception of chances for success was the mediator, with ethnicity serving as a moderator of the relation between perception of chances for success and recidivism. Legal cynicism was significantly associated with decreased

perceptions of chances for success ( $b = -.26, SE = .04, p < .01$ ). Like previous models, perceptions of chances for success were not significantly associated with recidivism ( $b = .27, SE = .24, p = .34$ ). However, increased legal cynicism was significantly associated with increased recidivism ( $b = -.27, SE = .10, p < .01$ ). In addition, no significant interaction between perceptions of chances for success and ethnicity ( $b = -.21, SE = .11, p = .052$ ) was noted. Nonetheless, conditional indirect effects of legal cynicism on recidivism revealed that the indirect and positive effect of legal cynicism on recidivism through perception of chances for success was moderated by ethnicity, such that a significant mediation was observed in Black ( $b = .05, SE = .02, CI_{95}: .018-.104$ ) and Hispanic ( $b = .09, SE = .03, CI_{95}: .043-.165$ ) youth but not in White youth ( $b = .01, SE = .03, CI_{95}: -.044-.080$ ), indicating a significant moderated mediation with regard to legal cynicism for recidivism.

## CHAPTER IV

### Discussion

Overall, the aim of this study was to explore relations between perceptions of the legal system as four variables: perceptions of procedural justice-police, perceptions of procedural justice- judge, legal cynicism, and legal legitimacy; and recidivism, specifically examining the role that perceptions of chances for success played in a sample of serious juvenile offenders. Because previous research and theories of perceptions of the legal system indicate that individuals who view interactions with the legal system as respectful and legal decision-making procedures as fair are more likely to comply with the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 1997) and that youths' perceptions of legal institutions have been linked to their expectations about their own behavior (Lane, Lanza-Kaduce, Frazier, & Bishop, 2002; Schubert, Mulvey, Loughran, & Losoya, 2012) as well as offending, we examined the mediating role of perceptions of chances for success as a consequence of perceptions of the legal system and a possible mechanism of future recidivism. Furthermore, the moderating role of ethnicity was explored, given the documented racial/ethnic differences regarding involvement with the justice system (McNulty & Bellair, 2003), perceptions of the police and legal system (Lee, Steinberg, Piquero, & Knight, 2011; Reitzel & Piquero, 2006), and general perceptions of future success. Overall, we expected that (a) increased positive perceptions of procedural justice (both police and judge), (b) increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and (c) decreased legal cynicism would be significantly associated with recidivism and that increased perceptions of chances for success would mediate the relation between these independent variables and recidivism, such that youth



who endorsed increased positive perceptions of procedural justice, increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and decreased legal cynicism would also endorse more positive perceptions of chances for success and thus not recidivate. Furthermore, we expected that ethnicity would moderate the relation between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism such that the relation between perceptions of chances for success and recidivism would be stronger for minority youth (e.g., Black, Hispanic) than for White youth.

The findings of this study largely support these hypotheses, as well as previous research. In general, this study documented significant links between legal cynicism, legal legitimacy, and recidivism in the expected directions. We hypothesized that (a) increased positive perceptions of procedural justice, (b) increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and (c) decreased legal cynicism would be significantly associated with reduced recidivism. At the bivariate level, correlations between these forms of perceptions of the legal system and recidivism suggested broad links between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism that were not specific to one particularly relevant perception of the legal system. However, in multivariate analyses, only legal legitimacy and legal cynicism demonstrated significant direct effects on recidivism, suggesting that these two forms of perceptions of the legal system may be most important to future offending. No significant direct effects of perceptions of procedural justice (i.e., perceptions of procedural justice—police or perceptions of procedural justice—judge) on recidivism were noted. In general, these findings are consistent with previous research that has found links between recidivism and legal cynicism (Fagan & Piquero, 2007) and legal legitimacy (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2015). In addition, the lack of a significant

direct effect of perceptions of procedural justice on recidivism follows the findings of Penner and colleagues (2014), who found that perceptions of procedural justice were not related to any offending variables at 6-months. Conversely, significant direct effects of legal legitimacy and legal cynicism on recidivism largely echo Cavanagh and Cauffman's (2015) finding that decreased perceptions of legal system legitimacy predicted increased youth reoffending one year after the youths' first arrest as well as Fagan and Piquero's (2007) finding that legal cynicism directly influences youth offending. That indicators of legal legitimacy and cynicism demonstrated relations to recidivism when perceptions of procedural justice did not, suggests that more exploration—with fine-grained assessment of the varied constructs subsumed by perceptions of the legal system—is needed. For instance, future studies should examine whether relations identified here can be replicated across samples with different rates/types of offending.

While the study did not find evidence for significant direct effects of perceptions of procedural justice nor perceptions of chances for success on recidivism, the findings of this study indicated that perceptions of future success significantly mediated the relation between all measures of perceptions of the legal system and recidivism in Black and Hispanic juvenile offenders. We hypothesized that increased perceptions of chances for success would mediate the relation between these independent variables and recidivism, such that youth who endorsed increased positive perceptions of procedural justice, increased perceptions of legal legitimacy, and decreased legal cynicism would also endorse more positive perceptions of chances for success and thus not recidivate. Indeed, across all four models, the independent variables were significantly associated with perceptions of chances for success such that increased perceptions of procedural justice—

police, increased perceptions of procedural justice—judge, increased legal legitimacy, and decreased legal cynicism were associated with increased perceptions of chances for success. Furthermore, across all four forms of perceptions of the legal system examined, evidence of a significant moderated mediation was noted, such that perceptions of chances for success mediated the link between increased perceptions of procedural justice-police, increased perceptions of procedural justice-judge, increased legal legitimacy, and decreased legal cynicism and future recidivism in Black and Hispanic, but not White juvenile offenders. In short, negative perceptions of procedural justice seem to drive decreased perceptions of chances for success, which, in turn, explains future recidivism in ethnic minority adolescents.

Overall, this is the first study to examine the relations between all three constructs—perceptions of the legal system, perceptions of chances for success, and recidivism—especially within the context of ethnicity. While certain measures of perceptions of the legal system may lead to future recidivism generally, the current study offers support for the differential causes of recidivism among ethnicities. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that the effect of perceptions of the legal system on recidivism is explained by decreased perceptions of chances for success in Black and Hispanic youth, a mediational effect that was not significant in White youth. Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that interventions designed to prevent juvenile offenders from engaging in repeated illegal behaviors may need to be tailored to target ethnic-specific attitudes. For instance, it may be that a decrease in the perceptions of chances for success that result from negative perceptions of procedural justice produce internalized racism that in turn increases offending behavior in minority youth. In fact, internalized

racism has been found to be a risk factor and key predictor for major components of the propensity for violence in Black youth (Bryant, 2011). Furthermore, exposure to racial discrimination may impact offending patterns as it can decrease self-esteem and self-efficacy in youth, with lower levels of self-efficacy associated with risky behaviors such as aggression (Sanders-Phillips, Settles-Reaves, Walker, & Brownlow, 2009). Little research exists on the presence and potential impact of internalized racism in Hispanic youth; however, research suggests that maladaptive behavior may derive from increased perceptions of discrimination or internalization of minority status (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994). Specifically, in a study of male Hispanic adolescents, researchers found that low self-esteem stems from acculturative strains (Gil et al., 1994). As low self-esteem has been related to aggression (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005), acculturative stressors such as perceived discrimination may lead to aggression. In fact, research has found that acculturation processes impact Hispanic youth's aggressive behaviors (Smokowski, David-Ferdon, & Stroupe, 2011).

Overall, experiences of discrimination may be intertwined with negative perceptions of the legal system and may impact youths' perceptions of chances for success through internalized racism and decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy, ultimately leading to repeat offending. Future research should directly examine this possibility, specifically in Hispanic youth due to the lack of current research.

Furthermore, future research should evaluate the impact perceptions of the legal system have on the development of internalized racism in these ethnic minority youth and how that internalized racism ultimately influences youths' self-efficacy and perceptions of chances for success. As a result, tailored interventions may be developed that combat

internalized racism and negative perceptions of chances for success by fostering beliefs in youth that he/she is capable of staying out of trouble with the law, making it more likely that the youth would then avoid engaging in illegal behaviors.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that preventing youth recidivism should begin with perceptions of the legal system. As the findings of this study suggest, perceptions of legal legitimacy and legal cynicism impacts future offending. Therefore, it is critical to foster positive beliefs regarding the legal system in order to decrease repeat offending behaviors in youth. Positive relations with police officers and other legal agents may encourage increased perceptions of legal legitimacy and decreased legal cynicism. As a result, programs that aim to increase positive relations between police officers and neighborhoods and promote fair and impartial policing by continuously reviewing police department protocols and rectifying any biases may improve perceptions of the legal system and subsequently reduce future offending in youth. In their review of research on racial bias and law enforcement in the killings of unarmed black male civilians, Hall, Hall, and Perry (2016) suggest that law enforcement should become more involved with the citizens in their communities as it offers more chances for positive two-way interaction and accountability. This two-way communication may then increase positive perceptions of the legal system that ultimately help decrease offending behaviors.

Several limitations must be noted with regard to the results reported in the present study and represent important areas for future research. First, all of the measures were obtained using self-report. While all attempts were made to ensure confidentiality, as with all self-report measures, accuracy can be called into question due to the potential for

response bias and shared method variance. Second, while the current study provides evidence for the lasting effects of perceptions of the legal system and perceptions of chances for success on offending by measuring recidivism 6-months later, it does not investigate whether these relations remain after longer periods of time, such as one year or two years. Finally, this study specifically investigates serious juvenile offenders with eligible crimes including all felony offenses with the exception of less serious property crimes, as well as misdemeanor weapons offenses and misdemeanor sexual assault. As a result, these findings may not generalize to youth who have committed “less serious” crimes. For instance, Rios (2006) argues that Black and Hispanic youth who are arrested for non-violent crimes are stigmatized upon entering the juvenile justice system and experience criminalization that is traditionally aimed at more violent offenders. As a result of the disproportionality between crime and criminalization noted in ethnic minority youth, these youth may therefore feel as if they are treated with even less fairness and equality than the serious juvenile offenders included in this study. The extent to which their perceptions of the legal system and perceptions of chances of success relate to recidivism remains an important area for future research.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the present study provides important information regarding the relation between perceptions of the legal system and future recidivism in the context of ethnicity. In summary, minority youth may perceive the justice system as discriminatory either because of direct experiences, through the experiences of others, or through known stereotypes. These experiences of discrimination may then be captured by perceptions of the legal system and may impact their perception of chances for success through internalized racism and decreased self-esteem and self-

efficacy, ultimately leading to repeat offending. As a result, tailored interventions that reduce these negative perceptions of chances for success by cultivating beliefs in youth that he/she is capable of staying out of trouble with the law may make it more likely that the youth would then avoid future offending. In sum, the present study provided the first evidence that perceptions of chances for success explains the link between perceptions of the legal system and recidivism (6-months later) in Black and Hispanic, but not White, juvenile offenders, through a series of moderated mediation models, pointing to perceptions of chances for success as an important mechanism for future research regarding prevention of crime in youth.

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## APPENDIX A

### IRB Approval Letter

DATE: August 16, 2016

TO: Anna Abate [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Amanda Venta]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Perceptions of the Legal System and Recidivism: Investigating the Mediating Role of Perceptions of Chances for Success in Juvenile Offenders [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2016-08-31266

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: August 16, 2016

**EXPIRATION DATE: August 16, 2017**

REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED

REVIEW 7

CATEGORIES

Thank you for your submission of your **Initial Review** for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received **Expedited** Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms

for this procedure which are found on the Application Page to the SHSU IRB website.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All Department of Health and Human Services and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. **Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of August 16, 2017. When you have completed the project, a Final Report must be submitted to ORSP in order to close the project file.**

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or [irb@shsu.edu](mailto:irb@shsu.edu). Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Donna Desforges  
IRB Chair, PHSC  
PHSC-IRB

## VITA

ANNA ABATE  
CURRICULUM VITAE

Graduate Student, Department of Psychology & Philosophy  
Sam Houston State University

Huntsville, TX 77341  
Email: aca034@shsu.edu

### Education:

**Doctor of Philosophy**, Clinical Psychology Expected 2021  
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

**Master of Arts**, Clinical Psychology Expected 2017  
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX  
GPA: 4.0

Thesis Title: Perceptions of the legal system and recidivism: Investigating the mediating role of perceptions of chances for success in juvenile offenders  
Committee: Amanda Venta, Ph.D. (Chair), Donna Desforges, Ph.D., & Craig Henderson, Ph.D.

**Bachelor of Arts** with Honors, Psychology, History (concentration: American) 2011  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC  
GPA: 3.63

Honors Thesis Title: The influence of parents' racial stereotypes on black students' beliefs and self-concept  
Advisor: Beth Kurtz-Costes, Ph.D.

### Honors and Awards:

Texas Psychological Association's Diversity Division Student Paper Award, Co-Author	2016
Sam Houston Leadership Scholarship Initiative (\$1,000)	2016
Bachelor of Arts with Honors	2014
Highest Honors for Senior Thesis	2014
Dean's List	2010-2014
Tom and Elizabeth Long Research Award	2013

**Publications:**

- Abate, A.**, Marshall, K. K., Sharp, C., and Venta, A. Trauma and aggression: Investigating the mediating role of mentalizing in female and male inpatient adolescents. Submitted, *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*.
- Bailey, C., **Abate, A.**, Sharp, C., & Venta, A. Psychometric evaluation of the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems 32. Submitted, *Personality and Individual Differences*.
- Ball, E., **Abate, A.**, Airington, M., Taylor, L., & Venta, A. When and How Does Race/Ethnicity Relate to Dysfunctional Discipline Practices? Submitted, *Parenting: Science & Practice*.
- Schiller, C. E., **Abate, A.**, Johnson, S. L., Schmidt, P. J., & Rubinow, D. R. (In Press). Reproductive Steroid Regulation of Mood and Behavior. *Comprehensive Physiology*.

**Professional Research Papers & Presentations:**

- Marshall, K., Long, T., **Abate, A.**, Barker, M., Henderson, C., Venta, A. (2017). *First data on linguistic analysis as a method for assessing symptoms after sexual trauma in adolescents*. Poster submitted to the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Seattle.
- Muñoz, C., Bailey, C., Camins, J., **Abate, A.**, Varela, J., Lyons, P., Boccaccini, M., & Venta, A. (2017). *Acculturation stress and criminal attitudes as risk factors for externalizing behaviors in recently immigrated adolescents*. Paper submitted to the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Seattle.
- Muñoz, C., Bailey, C., Camins, J., **Abate, A.**, & Venta, A. (2017). *When does Perception of the Justice System relate to rule breaking among immigrant adolescents? Examining the role of criminal attitudes*. Paper submitted to the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Seattle.
- Abate, A.**, Harmon, J., Marshall, K., Hart, J., Desforjes, D., Henderson, C., & Venta, A. (2017). *Perceptions of the legal system and recidivism: Investigating the mediating role of perceptions of chances for success in juvenile offenders*. Paper submitted to the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Seattle.
- Bailey, C. A., Venta, A., Varela, J., Boccaccini, M., Muñoz, C. G., Camins, J., **Abate, A.** (poster submitted). *The effect of unpreparedness for immigration court on psychopathology in recently immigrated adolescents*. Poster presentation at the Annual American Psychology-Law Society Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Ball, E., Airrington, M., **Abate, A.**, Taylor, L., & Venta, A. (2016). *When and How Do Race and Ethnicity Explain Patterns of Dysfunctional Discipline?* Poster to be presented at the annual convention of the Texas Psychological Association, Austin, TX.

**Abate, A.**, Marshall, K., Sharp, C., & Venta, A. (2016). *Trauma and aggression: Investigating the mediating role of mentalizing in female and male inpatient adolescents.* Paper to be presented at the annual convention of the Texas Psychological Association, Austin.

Bailey, C., **Abate, A.**, Sharp, C., Venta, A. (2016). *Psychometric evaluation of the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems 32.* Poster to be presented at the annual convention of the Texas Psychological Association, Austin, TX.

**Abate, A.**, Marshall, K., Sharp, C., & Venta, A. (2016). *Trauma and aggression: Investigating a moderating role of hypermentalizing in inpatient adolescents.* Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Denver.

Ricardo, M., Magyar, M., **Abate, A.**, Camins, J., & Edens, J. (2016). *PAI-A substance use subscales as predictors of minimization and denial of substance abuse among delinquents.* Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Atlanta

**Abate, A. C.**, Magyar, M., Ball, E., Ricardo, M., Hart, J., & Edens, J. (2016). *Use of the Personality Assessment Inventory-Adolescent to assess trauma-related symptoms in justice-involved youth.* Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychology Law Society, Atlanta.

**Abate, A.** (2014). *The influence of parents' racial stereotypes on black students' beliefs and self-concept.* Poster presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research, Chapel Hill, N.C

### **Research Positions:**

#### **Contract Researcher**

07/16 – Present

LoneStar Project Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Supervisor: David Pyrooz, Ph.D.

- Conduct computer-assisted interviews of state prisoners immediately prior to release
- Interview Texas Department of Criminal Justice offenders on a range of topics

#### **Graduate Research Assistant**

04/16 – Present

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Youth & Family Studies Lab

Supervisor: Amanda Venta, Ph.D.

- Assist clinical psychologist with project examining juvenile immigrants
- Supervise undergraduates and junior graduate students in data collection
- Provide research support for tenure-track psychology faculty member

**Graduate Research Assistant** 08/15 – 05/16

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Supervisor: Melissa Magyar, Ph.D.

- Assisted psychologist with juvenile offender and forensic assessment research projects
- Provided administrative support for tenure-track psychology faculty member

**Clinical Research Coordinator** 08/14 – 08/15

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Supervisor: Crystal Schiller, Ph.D.

- Managed a study on the role of hormones on depression in women with a history of postpartum depression
- Assisted with running research participants through fMRI scans and tasks
- Assisted with recruiting, screening, scheduling, and data collection
- Conducted structured interviews

**Research Assistant** 01/13 – 05/14

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Supervisor: Beth Kurtz-Costes, Ph.D.

- Assisted with data collection on several ongoing projects

**Teaching Positions:**

**Teaching Assistant** 08/16 - Present

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Supervisor: Christopher Wilson, Ph.D.

- Taught Section of Introduction to Psychology (Fall 2016)

**Clinical Positions:**

**Assistant Forensic Evaluator** 10/16 - present

Psychological Service Center, Huntsville, TX

Supervisor: Mary Alice Conroy, Ph.D., ABPP & Wendy Elliott, Ph.D.

- Conduct court-ordered forensic evaluations for 8 counties in Texas
- Conduct adult and juvenile competency and insanity evaluations for the court

**Student Clinician** 08/16 - present

Psychological Services Center, Huntsville, TX

Supervisors: Darryl Johnson, Ph.D., Craig Henderson, Ph.D., Wendy Elliot, Ph.D.

- Provide adults and children low-cost individualized therapy
- Conduct a range of psychodiagnostic and psychoeducational assessments

**Professional Service Activities:**

- Graduate Student Organization (GSPO) Vice President 08/16 – Present
- Assisted in the administrative, service and outreach aspects of GSPO
- Graduate Student Mentor 08/16 – Present
- Mentored younger graduate students
- Psi Chi Graduate Mentor 08/15 – Present
- Mentored students interested in attending graduate school

**Professional Trainings & Seminars:**

- Child Attachment Interview Training 08/16
- Menninger Clinic and Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families Training provided by Yael Shmueli-Goetz
- Caring for Our Veteran's Mental Health and the VA. 02/16
- Texas Psychological Association Presentation provided by Joseph Mignogna, Ph.D.

**Professional Affiliations:**

- American Psychological Association 2015 – present
- American Psychology-Law Society (Division 41) 2015 – present
- American Psychological Association of Graduate Students 2015 – present
- Texas Psychological Association (TPA) 2016 – present