

THE IMPACT OF FAMILY SUPPORT ON JUVENILE RECIDIVISM

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THE IMPACT OF FAMILY SUPPORT ON JUVENILE RECIDIVISM

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ABSTRACT

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Using data from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) evaluation, this study investigates the extent to which family emotional and instrumental support influence youth rearrest and reincarceration. Data include interviews with 191 male youth, which took place 3 months post-release. Recidivism was captured using official rearrest and reincarceration data over a follow up period of 676 days (22 months). Using logistic regression, this study tests 4 hypotheses: (1) Youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be rearrested, (2) Youth with higher levels of family instrumental support are less likely to be rearrested, (3) Youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be reincarcerated, (4) Youth with higher levels of family instrumental support are less likely to be reincarcerated. These hypotheses were partially supported. The findings in this study have implications for policies and research in regards to family emotional support and successful youth reentry.

KEY WORDS: Family support, Juvenile recidivism, SVORI

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Upwards of 81,000 young people are released into the community annually (Mears & Travis, 2004; OJJDP, 2012). Such individuals are extremely vulnerable to patterns of recidivism for a variety of reasons such as lack of family support, delinquent peer groups, poverty, and victimization (Sullivan, 2004, Berg & Huebner, 2011; Visher & Travis, 2003; Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Agnew, 1991; Jarjoura, Triplet, & Brinker, 2002; Logan-Greene & Jones, 2015). Although national juvenile recidivism rates do not exist, Lipsey (1999) conducted a meta-analysis, which concluded that nearly 50% of youth return to the juvenile correctional system following release.

Family social support can be defined as the perceived or actual emotional and instrumental provisions given by the community or social networks such as the family (Lin, 1968). Providing emotional and instrumental resources to individuals by displaying a sense of caring for others and providing tangible support, will decrease the likelihood of crime (Cullen, 1994; Pratt & Cullen, 2005). Consistent family social support specifically, increases the likelihood of successful reentry by acting as a protective factor against recidivism among reentering youth (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994; Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Mears & Travis, 2004). Generally, social support creates positive social bonds to the family and can act as a buffer against traumatic and stressful events such as being incarcerated (Breese, Ra'el, & Grant, 2000). With respect to emotional support, attachment theory is a guiding framework for understanding how such support may influence youth outcomes. Attachment theory states that the affective bond between a child and their parents is imperative for a child's successful social and emotional

development (Levy, 2005). When emotional support is low, the onset of anti-social behaviors, depression, anxiety, aggression, and delinquency is more likely to arise (Lapsley & Roisman, 2010; Fearon & Belsky, 2011; Buist, Dekovic, Meeus, & van Aken, 2004; Anderson, Holmes, & Ostresch, 1999; Caldwell, Silverman, Lefforge, & Silver, 2004). Prior research suggests that delinquent youth possess weaker attachments to their parents than non-delinquent youth (Nye, 1958; Hirschi, 1969; Rankin and Wells, 1990; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). The lack of emotional attachment and support can lead to youth cycling in and out of the criminal justice system. Strong emotional support is particularly important for youth who are reintegrating back into the community as their family is considered a primary source of comfort as they reintegrate back into society (Abrams, 2006).

Instrumental support consists of the material support the family provides (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). Familial instrumental support is tangible and includes assistance with housing, food, transportation, employment, enrolling in school and other financial obligations (Abrams, 2006; Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Instrumental support can decrease the likelihood of recidivism because it provides individuals with the tools required for successful reentry. Inmates who have been released are expected to take on difficult and stressful tasks, such as finding a place to live and securing employment (Severance, 2004). For successful reentry to take place, ex-offenders require preparation and resources for such tasks, which can be provided by the family. If youth do not have to worry about how their living arrangements postrelease and can rest assured that they will receive assistance with their additional tangible needs, they can fully focus on setting positive goals and increasing successful reentry. Such support is the key to success for

young offenders because it provides reentering youth with the stability required to increase successful reentry (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). It is argued that the lack of family instrumental support can negatively affect postrelease adjustment of youth (Sullivan, 2004). Not all families can provide the same support capacities, which can have a major effect on successful youth reentry (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001).

Specifically, the provision of both emotional and instrumental support provided by the families of returning prisoners play a major role in influencing the success or failure of such individuals. The majority of prisoners do expect their family to provide emotional and instrumental support once they are released from prison (Nelson, Deess, & Allen, 1999; Visher, La Vinge, & Travis, 2004). Analogous to the adult literature, youth do need assistance with living, financial obligations and transportation but such familial assistance is implied since youth are still considered minors (Abrams, 2006; Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Parents provide the majority of these needs but it may also come from extended family as well. Unlike adult ex-offenders who have the option of returning back to their family upon release or not, legally, most youth are required to reside with their family due to their minor status. This makes the reliance on family support greater. Some youth are unable to escape the disadvantaged qualities of their family, which may have led to their initial criminal behavior.

The family is arguably the most influential system as they can influence the risk of youth delinquency or serve as a protective factor against it (Le’Roy, Vera, Simon, & Ikeda, 2000). It is important to study the impact family support has on youth recidivism in order to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. Since youth reside with their parents or extended family, their support, or lack thereof, can either encourage or discourage their

successful reentry. Research on the interrelationship between family systems and youth correctional outcomes is quite limited, which is why it is imperative that we understand the nature and levels of emotional and instrumental support youth receive and examine its impact on youth recidivism specifically (Pratt & Cullen, 2005). Such information can influence policy and professional interventions that can reduce the likelihood of youth recidivism nationally.

Below I provide a roadmap of what is covered in this thesis. Chapter 2 will be a review of literature focused on juvenile delinquency and recidivism, both emotional and instrumental support in greater detail, the significance of such support on reentry in the adult and scarce youth literature, as well as additional factors that can contribute to juvenile justice system involvement. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used for this study. Specifically, data and sample, a thorough description of dependent, independent, and control variables, and analytic strategy. Chapter 4 discusses the results. Lastly, chapter 5 will include a summary of findings, study limitations, policy implications, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The family is central to the discussion on juvenile recidivism. Specifically, attachment theory provides the foundation required to explain the importance of emotional support when discussing youth recidivism. When juveniles receive emotional support from their parents, healthy attachments are able to form. Strong attachments act as a deterrent against delinquency and recidivism (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Rebellon, 2002; Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004). Contrarily, when the emotional attachment between youth and their parents are strained, the likelihood of youth delinquency increases, which can also lead to youth cycling in and out of the criminal justice system (Higgins, Jennings, & Mahoney, 2010). Low emotional support from parents and caregivers can only partially explain youth recidivism. Levels of instrumental support are also key when discussing youth recidivism. System-involved youth who are released require such assistance for successful reentry (La Vigne, Visher, & Castro, 2004; Martinez & Abrams, 2013). This includes assistance with living arrangements, school, employment, transportation, and financial obligations (Abrams, 2006; Arditti & Parkman, 2011). In order to reduce the likelihood of recidivism, both emotional and instrumental support are quite significant. Youth across the country reside in different family structures with varying dynamics that can either deter or increase the likelihood of recidivism. While the family is a primary factor when discussing juvenile justice system involvement, the role of peers, race, structural disadvantage, and victimization, are all factors that can contribute to youth justice processing.

Juvenile Delinquency and Recidivism

The number of delinquency cases that involved youth charged with criminal law violations increased steadily from 1985 to 1997 (62%) and fell 44% from 1997 to 2013 (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). The total number of delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts in 2013 was 1,058,500 (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). Such figures include various types of delinquency such as drug law violations; property crimes which include burglary, vandalism, and theft; crimes against a person such as simple assault, aggravated assault, and trespassing; as well as public order offenses, which include obstruction of justice, disorderly conduct, and weapon offenses (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). Specifically, juvenile courts handled 293,700 female delinquency cases in 2013, compared to 764,800 male cases (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). In the same year, white youth accounted for 76% of the United States juvenile population and black youth 16%. Sixty-two percent of delinquency cases handled involved white youth and 35% involved black youth (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). Recent data have exhibited that black youth and other racial/ethnic minorities are overrepresented within the juvenile justice system (Leiber & Peck; Fix, Fix, Tortura, & Burkhart, 2016). Such overrepresentation is also referred to as disproportionate minority contact (Piquero, 2008; Pope, Lovell, & Hsia, 2002). In 2013, 252,700 males and 70,600 females were adjudicated, which means boys were more than three times more likely to be adjudicated than girls (Puzanchera & Hockenberry, 2015).

Although the United States still leads the industrialized world in the rate at which they lock up youth, the confinement rate is declining (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzanchera, 2015). The United States has made positive strides on this issue, but a lot of

work is still extremely warranted. Juvenile incarceration is the most expensive of all criminal justice programs and despite significant public investment in juvenile corrections, interventions are only moderately effective in decreasing the likelihood of recidivism (Hook, 2004; Abrams, 2006). Many youth offenders have exhausted all available treatment programs and best efforts of the juvenile justice system. The tools used thus far have not been successful in decreasing the likelihood of youth cycling in and out of the justice system.

Upon release, very few juveniles are able to find a job or enroll back into school or even receive their high school diploma, which does in fact makes recidivism significantly more likely (Abrams; 2006; Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002). The transition phase of community reentry can take up to six months postrelease (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). This is critical time for youth as they are establishing routines and support systems that can reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Other challenges youth struggle with upon reentry include avoiding associations with delinquent peers as well as family members who engage in criminal activity since they may be their main sources of support (Abrams, 2007; Sullivan 2004). It becomes difficult for released youth to overcome the hurdles of transition, which in turn leaves them vulnerable to recidivism.

A major concern in the area of youth delinquency is repeated arrest and incarceration of youth (Thompson & Morris, 2013). Although the juvenile arrest rate is declining, recidivism has remained high and stable (Trulson, Marquart, Mullings, & Caeti, 2005). Moreover, the recidivism rate is a measure of desistance from offending and also a measure of success for juvenile corrections agencies. A report funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) named *Juvenile Offenders and*

Victims: 2014 National Report, stated that national recidivism rates for juveniles do not exist (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). Each state's juvenile justice system is different and such differences influence how states define, measure, and report recidivism rates (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). This makes it difficult to compare recidivism rates across states. Also, only 40 states publicly report juvenile recidivism data, which is also a rise for concern. In larger states such as California for example, three-year rearrest rates among confined youth were as high as 81% (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Research, Juvenile Justice Research Branch United States [CDCR], 2010). Moreover, a five-year longitudinal study conducted in Texas found that the rearrest rate for state confined youth was 85% (Trulson et al., 2005). Re-conviction rates among youth formally confined are lower, with a few states reporting an average 12-month reconviction rate of 33% (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Overall, recidivism rates over a 12-month follow-up period across states range from 12-55% (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Capturing recidivism can be quite difficult since it can be measured in different ways. It can be measured by rearrest, re-conviction, supervision violations, or reincarceration. It would be wise for states to uniformly measure recidivism multiple ways in order to make accurate conclusions.

Social Support Theory

Social support is defined as the emotional and instrumental resources that are provided by the family (Cullen, Wright, & Chamlin, 1999). Emotional support includes expressions of encouragement, acceptance, empathy, comfort, and love, which has the potential to stimulate internal motivation that is important for successful reentry (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph; Maruna, 2001; Maruna & LeBel, 2003; Breese et al.,

2000). Instrumental support includes providing individuals with tangible resources such as a place to live, financial assistance, employment opportunities, and transportation. Such support is also required for successful reentry (La Vigne et al., 2004; Martinez & Christian, 2009).

Cullen (1994) is largely credited for developing the concept of social support. His model consisted of three propositions when discussing its significance. First, he asserted on the basis of early works of literature that higher rates of crime and delinquency are due to low levels of social support. Second, he hypothesized that a relationship existed between decreased levels of social support and higher crime rates in a community, and that increased levels of social support decreases the likelihood of criminal involvement. Lastly, he expressed that social support encourages people to comprehend what is right and what constitutes a “good society”.

In American criminology specifically, there has been interest in the criminogenic effects of family life since this structure is deemed as significant and the pathway to adult criminality starts in childhood and adolescence (Sampson & Laub, 2005). The notion of social support is predominantly rooted in ideas advanced by the Chicago school (Cullen, 1999). High levels of social support can encourage coping mechanisms in response to straining life events such as incarceration and assist with successful reentry long-term (Agnew, 1999; Sampson & Laub, 1993). When organized networks of human relations assist individuals by tending to their emotional and instrumental needs, the likelihood of crime and recidivism is decreased (Colvin, Cullen, & Vander Ven, 2002; Cullen & Wright, 1997). Specifically, emotional and instrumental support can be provided by

informal social networks such as family and friends, or formal networks such as schools, and governmental agencies (Colvin et al., 2002).

Social support upon release is significant because it contains a normative element (Breese et al., 2000). The family displays values, norms, and models behavior that is socially acceptable (Breese et al., 2000). Transitioning from incarceration back into the community is extremely difficult and such support can mitigate these stresses. Individuals reentering society can benefit from emotional support since it provides them the opportunity to discuss personal issues and feelings with someone who cares about their well-being (Breese et al., 2000). Emotional support and possessing strong ties to the family can also provide the individual with a sense of purpose in life. Moreover, seeking employment and a place to live upon release specifically can be stressful and alienating, especially since ex-offenders are under the scrutiny of parole staff after release (Breese et al., 2000). Social support provided by the family can alleviate these emotional and tangible stresses, which makes successful reentry more likely.

When looking at social support through a macro lens, a relationship does exist between social support and societal crime rates (Cullen, 1994; Cullen & Wright, 1997). According to Braithwaite (1989), crime is correlated to the extent to which communities act in response to criminal behavior. Communities that effectively balance the pursuit of their individualistic needs while still showing concern for the needs of others is a form of support that can deter members from participating in criminal activity and decrease the crime rate (Chamlin & Cochran, 1997). For the purposes of this study, social support provided by the family unit will be examined. Generally speaking, the strongest effects of social support can be seen in childhood and adolescence, since they solely depend on

their family for all needs and are heavily influenced but their support capacities (Cullen et al., 1999). If family support capacities are weak, youth will have a difficult time reintegrating back into society, which can ultimately lead to recidivism. When there are increased levels of family social support, youth are less likely to engage in crime or cycle in and out of the juvenile justice system. (Colvin, Cullen, & Vander Ven, 2002; Cullen, 1994).

Emotional Support

Attachment theory is a guiding framework that can explain the relationship between emotional support, juvenile delinquency and recidivism. Attachment theory states that the affective bond, which develops between the child and their caregiver is important for a child's successful social and emotional development (Levy, 2005). Through Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1982) theoretical accomplishments and Ainsworth's (1973) conceptual and methodological advances, attachment theory has given emotional support a sound foundation. Bowlby was concerned with the development of attachment in infancy and early childhood. He observed the disruptive consequences of maternal deprivation in children temporarily separated from their primary caregiver (usually the mother) during World War II (Levy, 2005). Bowlby's (1969) observation suggested that a young child's need for his mother's love and presence is as great as his need for food. If the mother is absent, a large sense of loss and anger appears (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1982) noted that attachment-related behavior in infancy such as clinging, crying and smiling is part of an evolution-based functional biological system that increases the likelihood of protection from dangers and comfort during stressful times and also strengthens emotional attachment and support later in life (Levy, 2005). It was

hypothesized that if the needs of an infant or child were continuously unmet, emotional attachment would be minimal or non-existent. The infant or child will view others as unreliable and uncaring; this mentality can carry through adolescence and even adulthood (Levy, 2005). Contrarily, a child whose needs are constantly met in a consistent, loving and supportive manner will view others as dependable and trustworthy and will possess pro-social outcomes (Levy, 2005).

Later studies of attachment have begun to focus on childhood and adolescence. At this developmental stage, researchers began to observe the relationship between parental attachment and youth delinquency and recidivism. Appropriate emotional interaction between a parent and child is important for attachment. Secure attachment forms when high levels of emotional support between parents and their child are evident. A persistent finding of criminological research states that delinquent youth display weaker attachment to their parents than do non-delinquent youth (Nye, 1958; Hirschi, 1969; Rankin and Wells, 1990; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). When attachment is nonexistent, they are more likely to acquire delinquent friends in order to feel a sense of belonging (Warr, 2007). Parental attachment and emotional support during adolescence is quite relevant because it is linked to numerous indicators of adolescent psychosocial functioning such as identity development (Lapsley, Rice, & FitzGerald, 1990; Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001). Previous research has specified that more than 60% of adolescents possess some sort of problem behavior such as anxiety, conduct disorders, and attention issues (Reitz, Dekovic, & Meijer, 2005). When parental or family attachment is low, such behaviors can ultimately manifest into delinquency and recidivism.

When youth have secure attachment relationships and strong emotional bonds to their family, the likelihood of delinquency and recidivism is reduced (Demuth & Brown; Bell, 2009; Ingram, Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, & Bynum, 2007; Mack, Leiber, Featherstone, & Monserud, 2007). Specifically, low levels of attachment and emotional support throughout adolescence are associated with a higher prevalence of involvement in a variety of illegal acts such as alcohol and marijuana use, as well as more violent types of delinquency (Barfield-Cottledge, 2015). In this instance, youth do not feel inclined to please their parents and will act on delinquent impulses without worrying about the consequences.

Familial relationships that involve comfort, encouragement, acceptance, companionship and empathy are all facets of emotional support that can encourage successful reentry (Martinez, 2006). When such support is consistently evident, youth may feel their families are completely invested in their successful reentry. If low levels of family emotional support are continuous and professional intervention is non-existent, the issues will continue to worsen which could not only lead to youth delinquency but recidivism since youth tend to be less responsive to corrective interventions in such instances (Flexon, Greenleaf, & Lurigio, 2012). Youth rely on family immensely, which means many of the familial experiences and influences can impact their implicit and explicit behavior. Strengthening family attachments and their emotional support capacities can help deter recidivism in youth. Having strong social relationships absorb the trauma that comes with reintegrating into society and adjusting to a new set of rules, values, and demands that are not evident while incarcerated (Breese et al., 2000).

Although emotional support can decrease the likelihood of youth delinquency and recidivism, instrumental support from the family is also quite significant as well

Instrumental Support

Instrumental support is considered a facet of family social support. Instrumental support to individuals returning to the community involves providing them with material or tangible resources including housing, money, substance abuse treatment, transportation and employment (La Vigne et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 1999; Farrall, 2004; Visher et al., 2004, Taylor, 2015). With such support, individuals receive the necessities required for everyday living until they are able to become self-sustaining (Breese, et al., 2000). Ex-offenders are better able to adapt to life in the community and focus on increasing prosocial outcomes. Research on instrumental support is deeply rooted in the adult literature.

Much of the literature on instrumental family support comes from the Urban Institute's Returning Home studies. In the Chicago Returning Home study, 400 male respondents were interviewed while incarcerated and four to eight months after release (La Vigne et al., 2004). The reentry challenges that ex-offenders face include, finding a job, difficulty continuing their education lack of financial assistance, lack of housing arrangements, and lack of transportation (La Vigne et al., 2004). All elements are considered instrumental support and paramount to successful reentry. Many of the adults returning to the community do expect their family to provide them with instrumental support (Visher et al., 2004). The most common forms of instrumental support provided by the family included housing, financial and employment assistance (Cobbina, 2010; Arditti & Parkman, 2011; Nelson et al., 1999).

Based on nine in-depth semi-structured interviews with formerly incarcerated men between the age of 18 and 24, Arditti and Parkman (2011) set out to analyze young men's transition to adulthood within the context of their return to their family after a period of incarceration, as well as their reentry experiences. Data were collected from two parole office sites in an urban southeast city. All the young men in the study reported needing support from the families in order to stay out of prison. The support they reported included the provision of housing, food, financing, and transportation (Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Additionally, employment was profoundly important to participants which family can assist with. Participants in Arditti and Parkman's (2011) study voiced their difficulty obtaining employment. One participant specifically stated that he feared going back to his "old criminal ways" due to the fact that he did not find a job (Arditti & Parkman, 2011). Family ties contain an accumulation of social connections, which can be a rewarding employment resource for ex-offenders (Furstenberg, 2005; Portes, 1998; Farrall, 2004). If ex-offenders are provided with employment the likelihood of recidivism decreases (Laub & Sampson 2003; Petersilia & Rosenfeld, 2008; Uggen 1999; Berg & Huebener, 2011). In the adult literature, finding steady employment is one of the positive factors can decrease the likelihood of recidivism.

Martinez and Christian (2009) concluded that former prisoners sharing a residence with their family is an implicit form of support because it allows them to pursue other means of support such as receiving assistance with work and transportation. Former prisoners also felt that economic advancements and noncriminal pursuits were considered their own responsibility since their family already was providing or sharing their home (Martinez & Christian, 2009). Family members assisting former prisoners

with successful employment was a priority. To help former prisoners make the transition upon their release from prison, using the resources of the family definitely reduces the risk of recidivism. The instrumental support provided by family members can motivate ex-offenders to disengage from additional criminal activity.

A more recent study conducted by Barrick, Lattimore and Visser (2014) used the same data as the one in the current study (SVORI). The authors sought to examine the relationship between in-prison social ties (in-person visits, telephone calls, perceived family emotional support), postrelease social support (perceived family emotional and instrumental support), and long-term recidivism outcomes among women reentering the community (Barrick et al., 2014). The authors utilized data collected as part of the Multi-Site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative. Data were collected through inmate surveys and interviews and the sample included 255 women. In-prison emotional support was measured using a scale of the following 10 items: “I feel close to my family”, “I want my family to be involved in my life”, “I consider myself a source of support for my family”, “I fight a lot with my family”, “I often feel like I disappoint my family”, “I am criticized a lot by family”, “I have someone in my family to talk to about myself or my problems”, “I have someone in my family to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem”, “I have someone in my family who understands my problems”, and “I have someone in my family to love me and make me feel wanted.” Postrelease emotional support was measured using the same items, which were asked at the 3-, 9-, and 15-month postrelease interviews. Postrelease family instrumental support specifically was defined in this study as family members assisting with or advising an ex-offender with housing and finding a job, assisting them with their

substance abuse problem, providing transportation to work or other appointments, and providing them with financial support. Results from this study showed the importance of maintaining family social ties while incarcerated as it increases reentry success upon release. More than half of the female respondents reported having continuous contact with family members during incarceration. (Barrick et al., 2014). In the adult literature, high levels of emotional and instrumental support can decrease the likelihood of recidivism. Upon release, ex-offenders may not have the tools required to successfully reintegrate into society. They most likely will not have a job or have acceptable living arrangements. The stresses of everyday life can become overwhelming for these individuals and can lead back to illegal habits. Family emotional and instrumental support provides reentering individuals with the encouragement and the tangible tools needed for successful reentry.

Social Support and Youth Reentry

Previous research has asserted that a relationship exists between family structure and juvenile delinquency (Cookston, 1999; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Franke, 2000). Early work suggested that youth who reside in single parent homes are more likely to engage in delinquent activities than those who come from two parent families because the latter are better able to provide for, supervise, and socialize children compared to a single parent (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). However, more recent studies have expressed that simply residing in a single parent family does not truly help us explain youth delinquency and recidivism (Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Sullivan, 2004). Other family factors are imperative, particularly the levels of support capacities families possess.

Since many of the needs of adults reentering into society are similar to those of juveniles, we can learn a lot about family support and reentry. However, there are clear differences. Coinciding with the adult literature, juveniles reentering the community are motivated to change when they have supportive family members (Panuccio, Christian, Martinez, & Sullivan, 2012). Additionally, both emotional and instrumental family support can to reduce the risk of recidivism (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Visser & Travis, 2003). Although there is sparse literature on the impact of family social support on youth recidivism, the study conducted by Abrams (2006) sought to better understand the needs and challenges juveniles faced as they transitioned from corrections to the community. Some of the challenges included finding a job, transportation and being enrolled in school (Abrams, 2006; Sullivan, 2004). Semi-structured interviews with 10 male, youth offenders between 15 and 17 years of age were conducted from one correctional facility in Minnesota. Overall, it was found that transitioning back into the community came with big challenges and stresses for reentering youth. Challenges upon release are to be expected but the major element required to buffer them come from family social support (Abrams, 2006). All respondents stated that they experienced crime temptations upon their return. Although a few participants were reincarcerated up to 5 months postrelease, the majority did not engage in subsequent criminal activity due to the emotional and instrumental support that was provided by their family (Abrams, 2006).

Furthermore, the study conducted by Panuccio, et al. (2012) set out to explore the experience of successful reentry for juveniles who have been released from secure confinement and examined how social support was given. Data for this study were obtained from a larger project that examined a family case management program for

juvenile offenders released to an urban area of a northeastern state. The authors focused their attention on juvenile parolees who went through the juvenile reentry program; the sample consisted of 14 participants between the ages of 14 and 19. In this study, emotional support was defined as by family members providing affection and positive encouragement. Instrumental support was defined as parents providing housing, providing their child with a care and money they would not seek out illegal, financial means (Panuccio et al., 2012). Overall, Panuccio et al. (2012) found that while motivation to change delinquent ways is necessary for successful reentry, social support from the family is vital in keeping youth on a successful path. Social support can also be considered a source of sustainable motivation for juveniles, which decreases the likelihood of reincarceration in particular (Panuccio et al., 2012). Without the family support required to sustain positive change post-release, youth may persist in their delinquent behaviors and cycle in and out of the system (Panuccio et al., 2012).

Less studied is the difference in support capacities across complex family systems and its relationship with youth recidivism (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). It is argued that the lack of emotional and instrumental support from the family can negatively affect the adjustment of youth postrelease, which could ultimately increase the likelihood of recidivism (Sullivan, 2004). When discussing the needs of juveniles reentering society, the family is responsible for support since they are considered minors. However, not all family structures find themselves in the position to provide the support needed for juveniles reentering society (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001). They are sometimes dealing with their own crises such as poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001). If family issues contributed to the criminal behavior in the first place,

returning back to the same environment may lead to reconfinement (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). Living in certain environments can also worsen problems for reentering youth (Travis et al., 2001).

Unlike an adult reentering society, youth are minors and do not have a choice but to reside in the family home (unless removed by the state). Adults have the option of returning to their family, seeking support from friends or significant others or simply choosing to support and live by themselves. Youth do not have such options. If youth receive low levels of social support from their family, or their living conditions at home are causing them stress, successful reentry becomes quite difficult. Since youth solely depend on their family for support, their role is quite significant when predicting the likelihood of recidivism (Le’Roy et al., 2000).

Additional Contributors of Juvenile Justice System Involvement

Although the family is a significant factor when it comes to youth involvement in the juvenile justice system, there are a variety of additional factors, which can contribute to delinquency and recidivism. They must be controlled for in order to examine the direct relationship of family support on recidivism. Deviant peer affiliation is one of the major influences on youth delinquency and recidivism (Minor, Wells, & Angel, 2008; Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun 2001; Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano, & Harachi, 1998; Breese et al., 2000; Monahan, Steinberg, & Cauffman, 2009). Additionally, discussions about youth smoking, alcohol use, and illegal substances use (collectively referred to as youth substance use) continue to receive much attention among researchers, policymakers and the general public (Ferguson & Meehan, 2011). To explain the influence delinquent peers have on substance use, Ferguson and Meehan (2011)

conducted a study of 8256 youth to identify the influence of delinquent peers across age cohorts. Results from this study indicated that peer delinquency was the strongest and most consistent correlate of youth substance use. Youth spend much time with their friends, attribute great importance to them, and are more strongly influenced by them during this period than any other time in the life course (Brown, 1990). Adolescents engage in more delinquency if they have delinquent friends or they spend a large amount of time in unstructured socializing with them (Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Agnew, 1991; Simons, Wu, Conger, & Lorenz, 1994). Consistent with previous studies, Vitaro, Brendgen and Tremblay (2000), concluded that deviant friends contribute to the prediction of youth delinquency, which can ultimately lead to gang affiliation, severe crimes and youth cycling in and out of the justice system.

Gang membership can be considered a subset of negative peer influence. Youth who entertain criminal behavior are likely to hang around others who are likeminded. Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, and Tobin (2003) refer to gangs as social networks that embed their members in deviant customs and isolate them from prosocial arenas. Once in a gang, youth are forced to cut ties with their prior non-gang friends and acquaintances. Adolescents who are members of a gang show higher levels of delinquent behavior than non-gang members (Bouchard & Spindler, 2010; Curry, Decker, Pyrooz, 2013; Melde & Esbensen, 2013; Miller & Decker, 2001). Various studies have in fact demonstrated that the onset of gang membership was associated with higher levels of youth delinquency (Gordon, Lahey, Kawai, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, Farrington, 2004; Battin, Hill, Abbot, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1998). Specifically, an increase in drug selling, drug use, violent delinquency and property delinquency were evident in boys who

were affiliated with a gang as well (Gordon et al., 2004). Additionally, using a sample of boys aged 14 to 17 from Montreal, those who were a part of a gang displayed rates of delinquent behavior that were two or three times higher than those who did not belong to a gang while drug use was three or four times higher respectively (Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro, & McDuff, 2005).

Gang membership is an adolescent-oriented phenomenon and once they are recruited, they cycle in and out of gangs at distinct points in adolescence (Pyrooz, 2014). Youth become heavily influenced by these gangs, which means they are more likely to partake in illegal behaviors with other members. Once youth enter the system and reintegrate back into society, they are more likely to revert back to the same delinquent friend group or gang. The study by Pyrooz, Sweeten, & Piquero (2013) reiterates that many adjudicated juveniles remain in gangs for long amounts of time. The bulk of offending within the criminal career of an adolescent will likely be found within gang careers. As youth become more rooted in the gang, the constraining forces of it increase, which increases the likelihood of youth recidivism (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Lattimore, MacDonald, Piquero, Linster, & Visher, 2004; Olson, Dooly, & Kane, 2004).

Race is often intertwined with disadvantaged familial support capacities. Specifically, the make-up of racial and ethnic minority families are generally more disadvantaged than white families and these stereotypes influence the perceptions from key individuals who make legal decisions regarding delinquent youth (Bridges & Steen, 1998). Racial and ethnic minority families are more likely to be single parents, reside in poverty and have high paternal incarceration rates (Tasca, Rodriguez, & Zatz, 2011).

These factors are rampant among disadvantaged families and can contribute to negative youth outcomes such as delinquency and recidivism.

The courts heavily rely on their discretion when it comes to who they feel would be compliant or noncompliant once released back into the community (Smith, Rodriquez, & Zatz, 2009). In other words, if the courts feel that a juvenile would not abide by the laws in the community, they may be more inclined to implement formal sanctions instead of simply releasing them. Additionally, probation officers use race, ethnicity and class of the family in order to assess their ability and willingness to cooperate with the court and their child's reentry guidelines (Smith et al., 2009). Research has shown that such factors impact juvenile court decisions. For example, black youth and youth from poorer neighborhoods are more likely to have "noncompliance" while in the community, documented in their files which increases the likelihood of harsher sanctions (Smith et al., 2009).

Familial support capacities, the cooperation provided from the family, the quality of care, and economic resources available for treatment purposes all play a role in the juvenile court decision-making process (Bishop & Frazier, 1996; Leiber & Mack, 2003). Such studies show that harsher treatment for minority youth is due to the perceived lack of cooperation among minority parents and the low levels of family support they possess (Smith et al., 2009). Families living in such areas are more likely to be without transportation and less likely to attend meetings with court officials or be present during youth court hearings (Bishop & Frazier, 1996). When parents are unable to participate in court requirements for youth, they are seen as unreliable and court officials will assume they are unable to assist the court in the treatment of youth offenders. Due to lacking

family support capacities, such realities influence the decision to rearrest and confine youth (Rodriguez, 2013).

The relationship between poverty and juvenile delinquency remains central to the study of adolescent development. Prior literature has indicated that a relationship exists between the family's level of poverty, juvenile delinquency, and recidivism (Trulson et al., 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowly, 2002; Wolff, Baglivio, Intravia, & Piquero, 2015). Hay, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, and Schaible (2007) extended their research to not only look at the effects of familial poverty on delinquency, but examine how the level of community poverty where these families reside impact youth delinquency as well. The sample included 1423 individuals. Hay et al. (2007) hypothesized that the effects of family poverty on delinquency depend in part on the level of community poverty. To test their hypothesis, Hay et al. (2007) used the National Survey of Children (NSC) data that was supplemented with data from the 1980 census. The NSC which was a three-wave national panel survey of U.S. children and their families. Respondents were first interviewed when they were ages 7 to 11 and a follow up interview was conducted when those children were ages 12 to 16. The authors concluded that the effects of poverty on delinquency are partially dependent upon the level of poverty in the surrounding community. When there are high levels of community poverty, the relationship between family poverty and delinquency double (Hay et al., 2007). Additionally, in poor communities, having unemployed parents increases an adolescent's level of delinquency. From the findings of this study, it is clear that the interrelationship between community poverty, family poverty and youth delinquency is quite significant.

Youth who are concentrated in impoverished or disadvantaged neighborhoods are usually susceptible to violence (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). Jarjoura, Triplett, and Brinker (2002) conducted a study in order to assess the effects of both the level of exposure and its timing on delinquent involvement using fourteen years of longitudinal data from a national sample of young adolescents. The longer the periods of life spent in poverty, the greater the frequency of delinquent behavior; in other words, persistent poverty is related to higher levels of delinquency (Jarjoura, Triplett, & Brinker, 2002). Interestingly, living in poverty during the first five years of life makes later involvement in delinquency significantly more likely, while experiencing poverty from ages six to ten does not influence such behavior (Jarjoura, Triplett, & Brinker, 2002). The detrimental aspects of poverty as a child is related to the health and developmental processes a child goes through prior to age six. The additional disadvantages that come with living in poverty can make it difficult to stay out of the juvenile justice system since reentering youth would be coming back to the same circumstances.

There is also growing research suggesting that victimization may be a risk factor for subsequent offending in youth (Agnew, 2002; Berger, 2006; Daigle, Cullen, & Wright, 2007; Feder, 2007). Their victimization experiences have diverse behavioral consequences, which expose them to more victimization and involvement in crimes themselves. Those who engage in violent offending are prone to being victims of violence (Piquero, MacDonald, Dobrin, Daigle, & Cullen, 2005; Schreck, Wright, & Miller, 2002; Taylor, Freng, Esbensen, & Peterson, 2008; Tillyer, Fisher, & Wilcox 2011). Specifically, an individual's own violent behavior significantly increases their risk of victimization and it becomes a vicious cycle (Spano & Bolland, 2010). Such behaviors

can definitely increase the likelihood of youth participating in violent crimes, which in turn can lead to recidivism. Cullen, Unnever, Hartman and Turner (2008) focus on one form of victimization—being bullied in a school context—and explored its contributions to juvenile delinquency. The authors concluded that school bullying victimization had a positive, statistically significant effect on delinquent involvement (Cullen et al., 2008).

Another form of victimization that is commonly identified is child maltreatment. The relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency has also been consistently established (Begle, Hanson, Danielson, McCart, Ruggiero, Amstadter, Resnik, Saunders, Kilpatrick, & 2011; Behl, 2003; Loeber & Farrington, 2000). Maltreated children possess higher rates of violent delinquency than children who are not maltreated (Mersky & Reynolds, 2007). Fagan (2005) used data from the National Youth Survey to assess the effects of physical abuse on offending. Results showed that a strong relationship existed between adolescent physical abuse and involvement in crime. If youth are not provided with tools to deal with such trauma, they are more likely to participate in criminal behaviors and cycle in and out of the system. Neglect is considered the most common form of child maltreatment, which increases the risk of juvenile reincarceration as well (Jonson-Reid & Barth, 2000). Logan-Greene and Jones (2015) examined the effects of chronic neglect on adolescent aggression and delinquency. Failing to provide food, adequate shelter, adequate clothes and medical care contributes to the development of aggression and delinquency (Logan-Green & Jones, 2015). When neglect is consistent, delinquency continues which can increase the likelihood of cycling in and out of the system.

Although various factors contribute to youth delinquency and the likelihood of recidivism, the attachment to the family and their support capacities are expected to be most influential. Most youth spend their childhood and their adolescent years residing with their family, which is why it is important to strengthen family relationships. High levels of emotional and instrumental support are key factors needed to reduce youth recidivism.

Conclusion

Although the number of delinquency cases that involved youth charged with criminal law violations has fallen 44% from 1997 to 2013, juvenile offending still remains an issue nationwide (Furdella & Puzanchera, 2015). Early attachment is imperative for creating emotional bonds throughout childhood and adolescence (Hirschi, 1969). Such bonds will lead to strong familial emotional support and decrease the likelihood of recidivism by cushioning the stresses of reentry by providing youth with an outlet to discuss personal issues and providing love, comfort, acceptance, and encouragement (Breese et al., 2000; Martinez, 2006; Panuccio et al., 2012). Instrumental support is also key for youth reintegration success. Such support for youth include assistance with housing, finding a job, enrolling in school, transportation and financial (Abrams, 2006; Arditti & Parkman, 2011). It becomes quite difficult for youth cycling in and out of the system to maintain strong attachment to their family, which in turn makes instrumental support inconsistent. It is argued that the lack of family social support makes successful completion of justice system supervision very difficult since recidivism will become more likely (Sullivan, 2004).

In this thesis, I will be studying the multivariate relationship between family support—measured by emotional and instrumental support, youth recidivism—measured by rearrest and reincarceration as well as theoretically relevant characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, neighborhood quality, criminal history, family criminal history, peer relationships and SVORI participation. Existing literature mainly focuses on the reentry needs of adults and has just recently begun to explore the notion of successful juvenile reentry and social support. This scarce literature examines family social support and the perceived challenges upon youth reentry but has not quite delved into the statistical relationship between family social support specifically, and its impact on youth recidivism. The current study will add to existing literature by using a validated, national dataset to examine both emotional and instrumental family support and its statistical relationship with youth recidivism by using official rearrest and reincarceration data from SVORI. Although official data are far from perfect, an advantage is that the measures of recidivism are nationally comprehensive. If youth were rearrested or reincarcerated in a different state for example, these data would capture it. Focusing on juvenile reentry is important because if we can identify the predictors of youth recidivism, it encourages implications for policy that may prevent youth from cycling in and out of the adult system. Due to limited research on youth repeated involvement in the system and the role family support plays in their lives, this study sets out to fill in these voids. It is important to shift our focus to family support capacities and implement ways to strengthen their support towards their children so successful youth reentry is more likely.

The primary focus of this study is to resolve the shortcomings of prior research.

The current analysis aims to address the following research hypotheses:

1. Youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be rearrested.
2. Youth with higher levels of family instrumental support are less likely to be rearrested.
3. Youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be reincarcerated.
4. Youth with higher levels of family instrumental support are less likely to be reincarcerated.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Data and Sample

To explore the impact of family support on recidivism, the latter was measured by youth rearrest and reincarceration. Data were obtained from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), which funded agencies to create programs that would improve the likelihood of successful reentry among released prisoners. A multi-site, longitudinal study was conducted in order to determine if the program was effective. Respondents who participated in the initiative along with a group of similarly situated individuals who were also coming out of prison around the same time were the subjects in the study. SVORI included adult men and women prisoners as well as juveniles in confinement. The focus of this study is on juveniles who were released from four youth correctional facilities (Colorado, Florida, Kansas, and South Carolina). A total of 447 juvenile males were eligible to participate in the study, but only 337 were interviewed pre-release (Wave 1) because individuals were released before an interview was scheduled and completed. Release prevented interviews with 15% of juveniles (Hawkins, Lattimore, Dawes, & Visher, 2009). Also, approximately 8.3% of juveniles refused participation (or there was refusal by a guardian or another individual). The response rate for Wave 1 was 75%. Due to respondent attrition, interviews 3 months postrelease (Wave 2) were conducted on 236 juveniles, which was a response rate of 70%. Once missing cases among all variables were excluded, the final sample of juvenile males utilized in analyses was 191—87 SVORI participants and 104 non-SVORI participants.

Data collection for both SVORI and non-SVORI participants consisted of four waves of private, in-person, computer-assisted interviews which were conducted approximately one month pre-release (Wave 1) and 3, 9, and 15 months postrelease (Waves 2 through 4). All pre-release interviews were conducted from July 2004 through November 2005 (Hawkins, et al., 2009). Postrelease interviews were conducted from December 2004 to May 2007 in the community or juvenile detention facilities for those who were reincarcerated. For this study, juvenile males interviewed 3 months postrelease (Wave 2) were used to examine the impact family emotional and instrumental support on juvenile recidivism within the 22-month follow-up period. Wave 1 was not used since one of my key independent variables (instrumental support) were not captured prerelease. Waves 3 and 4 were also not utilized due to respondent attrition. The strength of using Wave 2 is that the support youth are actually receiving postrelease can be observed.

To handle missing data in Wave 2, listwise deletion was conducted. This strategy consists of eliminating cases with missing data on analyzed variables. Eliminating such cases does reduce the sample size and can lead to reduced statistical power (Lieberman-Betz, Yoder, Stone, Nahmias, Carter, Celimli-Aksoy, & Messinger, 2014). Across key independent variables, 10 missing cases were deleted. Additionally, three missing cases were excluded from the neighborhood variable “It is hard to stay out of incarceration”. Also, three missing cases were excluded from the variable “age at first arrest”, five missing were excluded from “Number of lifetime arrests”. Three missing cases and five “Don’t knows” were excluded from the family criminal history indicator, “Family member has been in correctional facility”. Also, four missing cases were excluded from the peer relationships variable “Close friends incarcerated at some point”. Chi-square and

t-tests were run to examine the significant differences between SVORI and non-SVORI participants. Key differences between the two groups were evident when looking at rearrest, reincarceration, and race/ethnicity. Specifically, SVORI participants were significantly less likely than non-SVORI participants to be rearrested and reincarcerated. Also, SVORI participants were significantly less likely to be white and significantly more likely to be non-white. These findings are important because it shows that the SVORI initiative was successful in further decreasing the likelihood of recidivism in participants when compared to youth who did not participate in the SVORI program. It also shows that to an extent, racial differences are evident between SVORI and non-SVORI participants (please refer to the appendix for results). It must also be noted that selection bias played a role when looking at SVORI participation. Youth were not randomly placed in the two groups which means the validity of the results stated may be undermined.

Dependent Variable

Table 1 provides a coding scheme and presents the frequencies for all variables included in the current analysis among the sample of juvenile males (n=191). In the current study, recidivism is measured using official *rearrest* (1=yes; 0=no) and *reincarceration* (1=yes; 0=no) data up to 676 days (22 months) postrelease. Approximately 81% and 20% of youth were rearrested or reincarcerated respectively within that time period. Official recidivism measures were obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) at the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Table 1

Coding Scheme (n=191).

		%
<i>Recidivism Measures</i>		
Rearrested	1=yes; 0=no	80.6
Reincarcerated	1=yes; 0=no	20.4
<i>Family Support Measures</i>		
Emotional Support	Mean; SD	21.2; 4.4
Instrumental Support	Mean; SD	11.0; 2.5
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Age (in years)	Mean; SD	16.7; 1.3
Race/ethnicity		
White	1=yes; 0=no	19.9
Non-white	1=yes; 0=no	80.1
Educational Attainment	1=high school diploma/ GED/some college; 0=no	22.0
Neighborhood Quality	Mean; SD	8.8; 2.8
Criminal History		
Age at first arrest (in years)	Mean; SD	13.0; 1.9
Number of lifetime arrests	Mean; SD	7.0; 7.2
Family Criminal History		
Family member has been in correctional facility	1=yes; 0=no	77.5
Peer Relationships	1= 1+ close friends; 0=none	82.2
Close friends incarcerated at some point		
SVORI Participant	1=yes; 0=no	45.5

Independent Variables

To capture family support, youth were asked a variety of questions regarding the levels of family emotional and instrumental support they felt they received 3 months postrelease. *Emotional family support* was captured with a 10-item index of statements that were originally measured on a 4-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked to indicate their current feelings about the following items:

(a) I feel close to my family, (b) I want my family to be involved in my life, (c) I consider myself a source of support for my family, (d) I fight a lot with my family members, (e) I often feel like I disappoint my family, (f) I am criticized a lot by my family, (g) I have someone in my family to talk to about myself or my problems, (h) I have someone in my family to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem, (i) I have someone in my family who understands my problems, (j) I have someone in my family to love me and make me feel wanted. All 10 items were recoded so that zero indicated no family emotional support and three indicated highest level of family emotional support. To create the emotional support scale, factor analysis was used to identify whether the items “hang together” and identify the items that needed to be reverse coded so that zero indicated no family emotional support and three indicated the highest level of family emotional support across all items. The items that were reverse coded included: (1) I feel close to my family, (2) I want my family to be involved in my life, (3) I consider myself a source of support for my family, (4) I have someone in my family to talk to about myself or my problems, (5) I have someone in my family to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem, (6) I have someone in my family who understands my problems, (7) I have someone in my family to love me and

make me feel wanted. Using all 10 items, an additive scale was created for emotional support. The scale ranged from 3 to 30 and was characterized by a high level of reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$).

Instrumental family support was captured with a 5-item index of statements. Items were also originally measured on a 4-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondents were asked to indicate their current feelings about the following items: (a) I have someone in my family who would provide help or advice on finding a place to live, (b) I have someone in my family who would provide help or advice on finding a job, (c) I have someone in my family who would provide support with a substance abuse problem, (d) I have someone in my family who would provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed, (e) I have someone in my family who would provide me with financial support. To create the instrumental support scale, factor analysis was used to identify whether the items "hang together" and identify the items that needed to be reverse coded so that zero indicated no family instrumental support and three indicated the highest level of family instrumental support across all items. All five items were reversed coded so zero indicated no family instrumental support and three indicated the highest level of family instrumental support. Using all 5 items, an additive scale was created for instrumental support. This scale ranged from 3 to 15 and is characterized by a high level of reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$).

Table 1 also includes additional measures in the analysis to control for other potential predictors of juvenile recidivism. The mean age of juveniles in this study was 17 and the majority were black (80%), followed by whites (20%). *Race/ethnicity* originally had four categories: White, Black, Hispanic, and other. A new variable was

computed to create a dichotomous variable. The “White” variable stayed the same. The dummy variables Black, Hispanic, and Other were added together to create one non-white variable (1=yes; 0=no). *Educational attainment* (22%) originally ranged from sixth grade completion to some college, but no degree. This variable was recoded into a dichotomous measure, which indicated whether youth possessed a high school education or not (1=high school diploma/GED/some college; 0=no). *Neighborhood quality* was measured with a 5-item index of questions 3 months postrelease. On a 4-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, youth were asked the following items: (a) It is hard to stay out of trouble in your neighborhood, (b) drug selling is a major problem in your neighborhood, (c) you think your neighborhood is a good place to live, (d) you think your neighborhood is a good place to find a job, and (e) living in your neighborhood makes it hard to stay out of incarceration. To create the neighborhood quality scale, factor analysis was used to identify whether the items “hang together” and identify the items that needed to be reverse coded so that zero reflects no neighborhood quality and 3 reflects the highest level of neighborhood quality. The items were reverse coded include: (1) you think your neighborhood is a good place to live, and (2) you think your neighborhood is a good place to find a job. The other three items were simply recoded so zero (instead of 1) reflected no neighborhood quality and 3 (instead of 4) reflects highest level of neighborhood quality. This scale ranged from 2 to 15 and was also characterized by a high level of reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$).

Additionally, *the average age at first arrest* and *the average number of lifetime arrests* was 13 and 7 respectively. *Family criminal history* was captured by asking the question “Has a family member ever been in a correctional facility?” The original answer

responses were “Yes”, “No”, and “Don’t know” but since we cannot make any conclusions based on the latter response, it was excluded from analysis. This turned the variable into a dichotomous measure (1=yes; 0=no). Specifically, the majority of youth stated that a family member had been in a correctional facility (76%). To measure *peer relationships*, youth were asked how many of their close friend has been incarcerated at some point in life on a 4-point scale from all of them to none of them. This item was recoded into a dichotomous measure as well (1=1+ friend; 0=none). The vast majority of youth stated that at least one of their close friends had been incarcerated at some point (82%). Lastly, a dichotomous measure was used to capture whether youth were SVORI participants or not (1=yes, 0=no). Approximately 46% were a SVORI participant.

Analytic Strategy

Analyses proceeded in two stages. First, bivariate relationships between key independent variables of interest (emotional and instrumental family support), other theoretically relevant measures, and the likelihood of rearrest and reincarceration up to 22 months post-release were examined on 191 male youth. Second, multivariate regression models were used to examine whether youth with higher levels of family support were less likely to be rearrested and reincarcerated, net of controls. Given the distribution of the dependent variables, logistic regression analyses were conducted.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the dependent variable rearrest and independent variables of interest. Descriptive analyses did not reveal any significant relationships between key independent variables and youth rearrest. Specifically, there are no statistically significant differences between the level of family emotional support received from youth who were rearrested and youth who were not. There are also no significant differences in family instrumental support levels between youth who were rearrested and those who were not. Descriptive analyses did reveal significant relationships between youth rearrest and juvenile characteristics.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics Among Juvenile Population by Rearrest (n=191)

	Rearrested	
	No %	Yes %
<i>Family Support Measures</i>		
Emotional Support	21.0; 4.9	21.2; 4.3
Instrumental Support	11.0; 2.7	11.0; 2.4
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Age (in years)	16.9; 1.3	16.6; 1.2
Race/ethnicity		
White*	32.4	16.9

(continued)

	Rearrested	
	No	Yes
	%	%
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Race/ethnicity		
Non-white*	67.6	83.1
Educational Attainment	32.4	19.5
Neighborhood Quality	9.0; 2.7	8.9; 2.8
Criminal History		
Age at first arrest (in years)	12.9; 2.0	13.0; 1.8
Number of lifetime arrests	7.0; 6.8	7.0; 7.3
Family Criminal History		
Family member has been in correctional facility	83.8	76.0
Peer Relationships		
Close friends incarcerated at some point	78.4	83.1
SVORI participant*	62.2	41.6
n=	37	154

Note. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

Race/ethnicity was associated with rearrest. Youth who were rearrested were significantly less likely to be white (17% versus 32%). Contrarily, non-white youth were significantly more likely to be rearrested than not (83% versus 68%). Also, SVORI participants were significantly less likely to be rearrested (62% versus 42%).

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for my key independent variables, control variables and youth reincarceration. Descriptive analyses did reveal a statistically significant

relationship between family emotional support and youth reincarceration. Specifically, youth who were reincarcerated had lower levels of emotional support compared to those who were not reincarcerated (22 versus 20). On the other hand, a significant difference was not evident between family instrumental support levels and rearrest. A significant difference was observed in the levels of neighborhood quality for youth who were reincarcerated. Youth who were reincarcerated had significantly lower levels of neighborhood quality compared to youth who were not reincarcerated (8 versus 9). Lastly, SVORI participants were significantly less likely to be reincarcerated (49% versus 30%).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Among Juvenile Population by Reincarceration (n=191).

	Reincarcerated	
	No %	Yes %
<i>Family Support Measures</i>		
Emotional Support**	21.7; 4.2	19.6; 5.1
Instrumental Support	11.1; 2.5	10.6; 2.4
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Age (in years)	16.8; 1.2	16.3; 1.3
Race/ethnicity		
White	20.4	17.9
Non-white	57.2	64.1

(continued)

	Reincarcerated	
	No %	Yes %
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Educational Attainment	23.7	15.4
Neighborhood Quality***	9.2; 2.7	7.5; 2.6
Criminal History		
Age at first arrest (in years)	13.0; 1.9	13.2; 1.8
Number of lifetime arrests	7.2; 7.7	6.4; 4.4
Family Criminal History		
Family member has been in correctional facility	77.0	79.5
Peer Relationships		
Close friends incarcerated at some point	80.9	87.2
SVORI participant*	49.3	30.1
n=	152	39

Note. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

Rearrest. Table 4 presents logistic regression analyses on family support and the likelihood of youth rearrest and reincarceration. Turning first to the logistic regression results for rearrest, interestingly, higher levels of family emotional support and family instrumental support were insignificant when looking at the likelihood of youth rearrest. Moreover, there was not a significant relationship between age and youth rearrest as well. Additionally, a partial relationship between race/ethnicity and youth rearrest was evident. Non-white youth were significantly more likely to be rearrested than white youth, which

coincides prior research. Specifically, non-white youth had an increased odds of rearrest by a factor of 2.72. A significant relationship between educational attainment and rearrest was also not observed in this model. There were also no significant relationships between neighborhood quality, age at first arrest, and number of lifetime arrests. Other factors unrelated to youth rearrest included family criminal history and peer relationships. Lastly, a significant relationship was observed between SVORI participation and rearrest. SVORI participants were significantly less likely to be rearrested when compared to non-SVORI participants by a factor of 0.34.

Table 4

Logistic Regression Results of Family Support on the Likelihood of Recidivism

	Rearrest Model			Reincarceration Model		
	β	SE	OR	β	SE	OR
<i>Family Support Measures</i>						
Emotional Support	.064	.059	1.066	-.140*	.063	.869
Instrumental Support	-.057	.105	.945	.148	.113	1.158
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>						
Age (in years)	-.081	.203	.922	-.382	.212	.682
Race/ethnicity						
Non-white	1.003*	.475	2.725	.009	.542	1.009
Educational Attainment	-.351	.552	.704	-.064	.638	.938
Neighborhood Quality	-.014	.075	.986	-.207**	.080	.813
Criminal History						
Age at first arrest (in yrs)	.071	.124	1.074	.240	.138	1.271
# of lifetime arrests	.011	.029	1.011	-.015	.035	.985
Family Criminal History						
Family member has been in correctional facility	-.375	.513	.687	.262	.484	1.299
Peer Relationships						
Close friends incarcerated at some point	.483	.518	1.621	.194	.574	1.215
SVORI participant	-1.079**	.417	.340	-.799	.422	.450

Note. *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Turning to model fit, with a p-value of .18, Hosmer Lemeshow's goodness-of-fit test indicates that the logistic regression model for rearrest fits the data well. The classification table provides us with an indication on how well the model is able to predict the correct category (rearrest/no rearrest). The model correctly classified 82% of cases which is a slight improvement over the 81% in Block 0, which means it is a good fit. Additionally, the variables in the rearrest model were not highly correlated to one another since the VIF for all variables were less than 4. It is clear that multicollinearity is not an issue.

Reincarceration. Looking at the logistic regression results for reincarceration, there was a significant relationship between family emotional support and youth reincarceration. A one unit increase in family emotional support significantly decreased the odds of youth reincarceration by a factor of 0.87. This finding coincides with prior work and confirms that family emotional support plays a key role in decreasing the likelihood of reincarceration. Contrarily, a significant relationship was not observed between family instrumental support and youth reincarceration. Also, age, race/ethnicity and educational attainment did not significantly predict youth reincarceration. Coinciding with prior research, a significant relationship was observed between neighborhood quality and youth reincarceration. In this analysis, a one unit increase in neighborhood quality significantly decreased the odds of reincarceration by a factor of 0.81. Other factors unrelated to youth reincarceration included, age at first arrest, the number of lifetime arrests, whether a family member has been in a correctional facility, whether an individual had one or more friends who has been incarcerated at some point, and SVORI participation.

Turning to model fit, with a p-value of .38, Hosmer Lemeshow's goodness-of-fit test indicates that the logistic regression model for reincarceration fits the data well. The classification table provides us with an indication on how well the model is able to predict the correct category (reincarceration/no reincarceration). The model correctly classified 80% of cases which shows no improvement from Block 0 which was also 80%. The model can still be considered a good fit. Since the VIF for all variables in the reincarceration model was less than 4, multicollinearity was not an issue. In other words, the variables in this model are not highly correlated to one another.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Summary of Findings

As support capacities vary across family systems, it is important to understand how levels of social support influence recidivism in youth. Using a sample of 191 male youth, the current study examines the relationship between family social support, youth rearrest, and youth reincarceration. Specifically, this study sets out to answer four clear research hypotheses, net of relevant controls: (1) youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be rearrested, (2) youth with higher levels of family instrumental support are less likely to be rearrested, (3) youth with higher levels of family emotional support are less likely to be reincarcerated, (4) youth with higher levels of family instrumental support less likely to be reincarcerated.

It was hypothesized that youth with higher levels of family emotional and instrumental support would make youth rearrest less likely but hypothesis 1 and 2 were not supported in this analysis. It is very surprising that a relationship does not exist between family social support and youth rearrest since it is contrary to prior research. It has been concluded in many studies that emotional and instrumental support provided by the family can decrease the likelihood of recidivism (Cullen, 1994; Giordano et al., 2000; Maruna & LeBel, 2003; Barrfield-Cottledge, 2015; Flexon, et al., 2012; Panuccio, et al., 2012; Taylor, 2016; Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Laub & Sampson, 2003, Uggen, 2000). The lack of significant findings could be due to the fact that the measures in this analysis were capturing juvenile justice processing instead of offending in particular. Not all youth who commit a crime will be rearrested for it. Therefore, levels of family social

support may not directly influence whether youth will be rearrested or not. A second possible explanation for the lack of insignificant findings for social support could be that upon release, youth may continue to be influenced by additional family risk factors such as sexual or domestic abuse, which may override any sort of effect social support has on delinquent behavior and in turn, the likelihood of rearrest (Braman & Wood, 2003; Cottle et al., 2001). In such cases, the benefits of social support in general do not outweigh the costs when support providers are the sources of distress.

Continuing with the rearrest model, a few controls were significant. Consistent with prior research, race/ethnicity was a predictor of whether youth were rearrested or not. Specifically, non-white youth were more likely to be rearrested when compared to white youth (Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Cannon & Wilson, 2005; McGovern, Demuth, & Jacoby, 2009; Sabol, Adams, & Parthasarathy, 2000). Race effects are evident in the juvenile justice system with black youth in particular being the most disproportionately represented minority group (Pope et al., 2002; Leiber, 2002). Specifically, research has concluded that black youth have a much higher rate of rearrests than whites and other races/ethnicities (Sickmund, 2004; Stahl, 2003). Although black youth are rearrested more by police, this does not necessarily mean they are committing more crimes. Black youth typically receive more punitive sanctions in general, which is completely unacceptable (Bridges & Steen, 1998; Steffenmeiser & Demuth, 2000; Rodriguez et al., 2009). Sanctions should be solely based on the offense rather than race/ethnicity. Also, black youth are more likely to have an incarcerated father, which can have a variety of negative outcomes on youth including delinquency and recidivism (Huebner & Gustafson, 2007; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011; Murray, Janson, & Farrington, 2007;

Murray, Loeber, & Pardini, 2012; Wildeman, 2009; Johnson & Easterling, 2015).

Additionally, black youth are more likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods, which are characterized by poverty and dependence on public assistance, and have higher crime rates, which can lead to youth cycling in and out of the juvenile justice system as well (Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowly, 2002).

Although significant differences between levels of family emotional and instrumental support and race were not evident in this particular analysis, prior research has also shown that harsher treatment for minority youth is due to the perceived lack of cooperation among minority parents and the low levels of family support they possess (Smith et al., 2009). Again, families living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to be without transportation and less likely to attend meetings with court officials or be present during youth court hearings (Bishop & Frazier, 1996). When parents are unable to participate in court requirements for youth, they are seen as unreliable and court officials will assume they are unable to assist the court in the treatment of youth offenders. Low levels of family social support among racial and ethnic minority families influence the decision to rearrest and confine youth (Rodriguez, 2013).

Additionally, a significant relationship was evident between SVORI participation and rearrest. Youth who participated in SVORI were less likely to be rearrested. As stated, the SVORI initiative was implemented to develop, enhance, or expand programs to encourage the successful reentry of adults and youth to society from prisons and juvenile detention facilities (Lattimore & Visser, 2009). The idea was to improve criminal justice, employment, education, health, and housing outcomes as well as improve family and community involvement of individuals who would be released

(Lattimore & Visser, 2009). After being incarcerated for a long length of time, individuals return home and are faced with many barriers upon reintegration (Visser & Travis, 2011). Youth who participated in SVORI received more individualized and comprehensive services and it is clear that investing in this initiative demonstrated favorable outcomes.

Moreover, hypothesis 3 and 4 were specifically directed to youth reincarceration. My third hypothesis was supported while my fourth hypothesis was not. As revealed in the reincarceration model, higher levels of emotional support significantly decreased the likelihood of youth reincarceration. This finding is consistent with prior studies, when high levels of emotional support are evident, the likelihood of recidivism decreases (Panuccio, et al., 2012; Cullen 1994; Meadows, 2007; Barrick, et al., 2014; Taylor, 2016). Emotional support is important for reducing recidivism because it provides youth with the encouragement, comfort and acceptance (Martinez, 2006; Panuccio et al., 2012). In other words, emotional support can act as a safety net against the stresses that come with reintegrating back into society. There are instances whereby individuals are not given the tools or skills upon release to be successful (Breese et al., 2000). Family emotional support is advantageous because they are able to discuss personal issues and can receive advice from people who love and care for them (Breese et al., 2000). Upon release individuals are under strict probation orders therefore, it becomes easy to get reincarcerated for simply violating the terms of probation (Breese et al., 2000). Family emotional support is important because they can encourage and empathize with the individual upon their release. Additionally, providing comfort, and love can increase the internal motivation needed for youth to abide by strict parole guidelines and decrease the

likelihood of reincarceration (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph; Maruna, 2001; Maruna & LeBel, 2003).

Contrary to expectation, a significant relationship did not exist between family instrumental support and reincarceration. Although research has identified assistance with employment, housing, and finances as critical to successful reentry, it is surprising that the hypothesized relationship was not observed (Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Uggen, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Again, instrumental support may not matter in this instance because measures are capturing juvenile justice processing instead of offending. It has been concluded that individuals may turn to crime when they are unable to secure the tangible needs required for successful reentry (Breese et al., 2000). However, instrumental support may not *directly* affect the likelihood of reincarceration.

Continuing with the reincarceration model, neighborhood quality was an additional predictor of whether youth were reincarcerated, which is consistent with prior research (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999; Jacob, 2006). Higher levels of neighborhood quality decreased the likelihood of reincarceration. Neighborhoods with quality housing supply, little residential turnover, minimal crime and gang activity, and an abundance of resources means recidivism is less likely (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). Such environments encourage prosocial behaviors since negative influences are at a minimum. High levels of neighborhood quality also means that a wide range of employment opportunities are also available. Having access to a variety of services and amenities in the community can decrease the likelihood of youth recidivism and foster favorable outcomes (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006).

Limitations

As with any study there are limitations to research. In this study selection bias within the sample was evident. SVORI and non-SVORI participants were placed into the two groups based on a certain criterion that local site staff used instead of individuals being randomly assigned. This data sample strategy of SVORI might mean that youth in this study may not be fully representative of all confined youth, which affects the generalizability of findings. Additionally, due to respondent attrition over successive waves of data collection, only half of the juvenile sample was analyzed which can severely affect the statistical power of results. Moreover, a time ordering issue was also evident. Juveniles were released as a cohort but they were not interviewed until 3 months postrelease. In this analysis, 34 juveniles were rearrested and 2 juveniles were reincarcerated *before* interviews 3 months postrelease were conducted. Since the sample size was small to begin with the results of this study could have a negative impact on results since many recidivated before levels of family social support were measured. This in turn reverses the causal relationship. Due to such issue, the findings in this analysis should be interpreted cautiously and considered exploratory. It must also be noted that this was a high-risk juvenile sample. These juveniles overall had more than one charge and have been cycling in and out of the youth justice system therefore, this sample is not representative of all delinquent youth.

Additionally, the sample in this study only consisted of male respondents, which means I did not have a comprehensive representation of all youth. Lastly, the perspectives of youth support providers (parents/guardians) were not included in the study. This would be advantageous in order to better understand the support capacities

they possess and can provide to youth. SVORI also did not capture the specific type of support provider youth were going back to upon release. Observing the differences between youth residing with different family members or non-family members may hone significant results. Also, prior research has stated a clear relationship between poverty and recidivism, but since this study did not have a socioeconomic status measure, this notion could not be analyzed.

Policy Implications

The finding regarding emotional support offer support for policies within the youth correctional system. Family-based interventions that include both juvenile offenders, parents, and key individuals that are important in the family system should be required and provided by either juvenile justice agencies prior to release and the community upon release. The idea is to assist with family functioning by strengthening family ties as well as improving social and communication skill between all parties, which can significantly increase the likelihood of emotionally supportive relationships and decrease subsequent offending (Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Taylor, 2016). Findings regarding race/ethnicity and recidivism offer support for key policies within the juvenile correctional system as well. As stated, racial and ethnic minority youth are more susceptible to a variety of disadvantages. For example, racial and ethnic minority youth are more likely to have an incarcerated parent. This means they are more likely to be raised in single-parent families who may be a victim of residential instability and may be living in poverty- and crime-stricken areas. Such circumstances increase the likelihood of youth recidivism. Racial and ethnic minority youth who reside in such areas are also more likely to attend schools with poor education systems and are not equipped with the

tools required to escape this lifestyle. This in turn leads to a vicious cycle of continuous community disadvantage. Efforts should be made to limit the negative effects of certain familial transitions. This could include juvenile justice agencies implementing weekly one-on-one sessions with youth and a counselor after release. The idea is for youth to discuss their frustrations in regards to their disadvantaged family life and assist them with handling them in a positive and constructive way. Since family support capacities across racial and ethnic minorities groups can be low, these sessions could help encourage and support youth as they adapt to community reintegration.

As stated, a relationship exists between neighborhood quality and the likelihood of recidivism. Higher levels of neighborhood quality decreases the likelihood of reincarceration. Juvenile justice agencies can use such findings to implement community based juvenile reentry programs that can help lessen cumulative disadvantage. Such programs should offer an array of services tailored to the assessed needs of the individual. Such programs would be similar to the SVORI initiative but would be structured around the specific needs of youth and would require parental participation. Services should include supportive counseling, courses to prepare for reentry, transition planning, and assistance with vocational and educational placements (Abrams, Terry, & Franke, 2011). Since it has been found that the average length of time spent in a reentry program is higher among those who did not recidivate, it would be advantageous for youth to remain in the program for at least 9 months (Abrams et al., 2011). The idea is to encourage and instill positive tactics into reentering youth, which can decrease the likelihood of recidivism.

Directions for Future Research

There is limited empirical research on the impact of family support on juvenile recidivism. Future research should continue to focus on both facets of family support (emotional and instrumental) in order to increase the likelihood of successful youth reentry. An expansion on emotional and instrumental measures would be advantageous since both concepts are extremely subjective. Such expansion can positively affect results on youth recidivism. Also, future research should also expand their sample. For example, youth respondents should be sought from a variety of geographical areas for a more comprehensive analysis. Future research should also make it a priority to minimize attrition in order to confirm the findings expressed thus far or add to them. Also, female youth should be incorporated into analyses so gender can be controlled for and the differences between males and females can be examined. Lastly, parents and guardians should be interviewed since they are an integral part of successful youth reentry and they can better explain the support capacities they are able to provide youth. Researchers would be able to accurately identify the level of support the family is able to provide youth, which can add to existing research when discussing youth recidivism.

Future research should also focus on the impact of family support and additional outcomes such as youth arrest, incarceration, and adjudication. This is important to study because if we can pinpoint the familial factors that contribute to initial juvenile justice system involvement, it can give us more insight of how family systems influence juvenile recidivism. Additionally, recidivism can be captured in a variety of ways, therefore, the impact of family support on youth reconviction and parole violation should also be investigated in order to expand this measure. Moreover, future research should also

examine the relationship between family support and its direct relationship with criminal behavior. This would assist with our understanding of how such social support relates to crime desistence. Future research should also observe the relationship between the maintenance of family ties and support while youth are still incarcerated and its impact on recidivism since such ties may have an impact on successful reentry. Lastly, it would be interesting to observe the relationship between family support and youth relationships (platonic or romantic) and school performance. Such concepts could influence certain behaviors that can later lead to criminal justice outcomes such as initial juvenile justice involvement and recidivism.

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APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics Among Juvenile Population by SVORI participants (n=191).

	<u>SVORI Participant</u>	
	No %	Yes %
<i>Recidivism Measures</i>		
Rearrested*	86.5	73.6
Reincarcerated*	26.0	13.8
<i>Family Support Measures</i>		
Emotional Support	21.0; 4.3	21.6; 4.6
Instrumental Support	10.7; 2.4	11.3; 2.5
<i>Juvenile Characteristics</i>		
Age (in years)	16.6; 1.3	16.8; 1.3
Race/ethnicity		
White*	26.0	12.6
Non-white*	74.0	87.4
Educational Attainment	22.1	21.8
Neighborhood Quality	8.8; 2.9	8.9; 2.6
Criminal History		
Age at first arrest (in years)	13.1; 1.8	13.0; 2.0
Number of lifetime arrests	7.3; 6.0	6.8; 8.4
Family Criminal History		
Family member has been in correctional facility	75.0	80.5
Peer Relationships		
Close friends incarcerated at some point	79.8	85.1
n=	104	87

Note. ***p ≤ .001; **p ≤ .01; *p ≤ .05.

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