

UNTANGLED: THE EFFECTS FAMILY STRUCTURE HAS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Juvenile delinquency is an issue in today's society for various reasons. This issue can result due to different motives, but family dynamics is one of the most vital factors. The current study extends prior research done in regards to the family factors that affect juvenile delinquency and what policies and programs are available to eliminate these factors. The seven family dynamics that are studied are socioeconomic status, divorce, cohabiting, family transitions, parental incarceration, parental control, as well as parental substance abuse. A subsample of policies and programs are assigned to each factor and researched of whether or not they are effective. Majority of the programs were effective and were found to minimize antisocial behaviors among adolescents. The programs that were not evaluated were still found to have a positive impact on juveniles' behaviors due to the outcomes of the policies. Investing in these programs and policies are beneficial for juveniles and the impact that family dynamics play on delinquency.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most critical issues facing most societies today. It is a crucial issue to address because young people will eventually be responsible for the future development or decline of our country. For years, there have been numerous studies done to help explain the motives behind juvenile delinquency (Iravani et al., 2013). Before introducing factors that are significant in leading adolescents to offending, it is important to first understand a few fundamentals of juvenile offenders.

A majority of the states mark the age of 18 as the legal transition age from adolescence to adulthood although there are nine states that classify 17-year-olds as adults and two that consider 16-year-olds as adults (Chammah, 2015). Statistically, the number of arrests of individuals under the age of 18 in the United States is roughly 1.9 million per year (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011). The age-crime curve is a well-known model that shows the prevalence of juvenile offending. According to this model, juvenile offending tends to increase from late childhood (around age 9) peaking in the teenage years—from age 15 to 19—and then decline in the early 20s. However, there are various versions of this curve that are dependent on the type of crime. For example, violent crimes tend to peak in later ages more than property crimes (From Juvenile Delinquency to Young Adult Offending, 2014). The age-crime curve is of importance because it helps illustrate the prevalence of certain crimes in a juvenile's life and the likely age they most commonly occur.

Family Dynamic Factors Affecting Juvenile Delinquency

There are numerous factors that have been researched that contribute to juvenile

offending such as peers, neighborhoods, and/or poor education. According to Wright and Wright (1994), the family is the ultimate foundation of human society. The family structure has been extensively researched and documented as a connection to delinquency (Rebellon, 2002). This thesis analyzes seven different components of family structures that have an impact on juvenile delinquency.

The first factor, one that child protection services investigate most commonly, is neglect. Child neglect is an urgent problem for various reasons, all of which concern the negative effects that hinder later social and psychological functioning (Lansford, Miller-Johnson, & Pettit, 2009). Another component, a confounding factor of neglect, is the socioeconomic status of a family (Wald, 1976). Families that are poverty stricken are not always able to provide sufficient resources for children growing up which can force the children to do whatever it takes to survive. When children are faced with little or no support, they turn to negatively influenced peers, neighbors, or siblings in order to survive which can lead to antisocial behaviors and crime.

Next, divorce has been found to be a predictor of crime. In fact, 75% of the youth that are in correctional facilities have experienced single, separated, or divorced parents (Aaron & Dellaire, 2010). Due to the commonness of divorce, there has been also an increase in the next factor, cohabiting couples—living with a partner without being married. As a result of the different sources of tension presented in a cohabiting family, researchers have found that there is an increased range of behavioral problems within non-married families than that of married households.

The change in marital status leads into the next factor—family transitions. These transitions can include moving from a single-parent family to a cohabiting or married stepfamily. It can also include transitioning from a two-biological-parent home or a cohabiting home into a

single-parent family (Brown, 2006). Family transitions can force children to change schools, neighborhoods, and friends. Throughout these transitions, family processes are often altered, associating these changes with a decline of children's well-being, including delinquency (Amato, 2002).

Another factor influencing juvenile delinquency is parental incarceration. Fifty three percent of prisoners have reported having a child that is a minor with 25% of them age four or younger. (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). This becomes a major component of juvenile delinquency when children do not have parents within the household to raise them, teach them right from wrong, or financially support them. This leads into the next component of family dynamics which is the amount of parental guidance of children. Research has shown that lower levels of parental control open up more opportunity for misbehavior due to the increase of unsupervised time and opportunity to be involved with delinquent activities (Barnes et al., 2006). On the other hand, researchers have found that children will act out if they have excessive levels of parental control, including higher levels of structure and increased supervision (Nye, 1958).

The last factor, found to be the most potent risk factor of juvenile delinquency is parent's substance-abusing behaviors (Johnson & Leff, 1999). When children are raised with drug and alcohol use within the walls of their own home, they appear to be especially vulnerable to the risk for maladaptive behaviors due to the numerous risk factors present in their life (Cadoret, Yates, Troughton, Woodworth, & Stewart, 1996). Risk factors specifically within substance-abusing parents include poor home management skills, deficiency in family communication skills, and lacking in the ability to provide structure or discipline within the family (Paterson & Stouthamer, 1984).

Research Questions

Many studies have shown that antisocial behaviors have their foundations in disruptive, aggressive, and antisocial behaviors in childhood (Lay, Ihle, Esser & Schmidt, 2005). Family contexts, dynamics, as well as parent-child relationships are critical. These relationships operate as groundwork for the provision of quality care, and, of course, are imperative for healthy psychological development. A large portion of criminological research has found that there is a documented connection between family structure and delinquency (Douglas-Siegel & Ryan, 2013). It is important to critically analyze family structures and dynamics in order to identify risk factors in the early years of an individual's life. Although these tasks seem plausible, the research done to find answers to the causation of juvenile delinquent behaviors still remains a "wheel in perpetual motion" (Price & Kunz, 2003, p. 111). This thesis attempts to explain the research on why children become delinquents. It will address the risk factors that increase the likelihood they will commit a crime and what policies can be implemented to alter these behaviors. This thesis seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What policies impact the identified risk factors for juvenile delinquency?
2. Do these policies have a positive or negative impact on risk factors?
3. What changes could be made to improve the impact of these policies on risk factors for juvenile delinquency?

Conclusion

Researchers have extensively analyzed juvenile delinquent behaviors and the seriousness that family dynamics play on these behaviors. Numerous studies have touched on these family dynamic factors previously mentioned and how they impact juveniles. The goal of this thesis is to bring about awareness of the importance of childrens' upbringing and surroundings within

their families and find policies that can promote healthy family functioning for these children.

Children are malleable and need positivity and encouragement in order to discontinue the deviant behaviors that may be apparent in their chaotic lives at home. The proceeding chapter will elaborate extensively on these various family dynamics and the role they have on juvenile delinquency.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are seven significant factors within a family's dynamics that play a role in juvenile delinquency. These factors include socioeconomic status and maltreatment, parents' marital status, family transitions, parental incarceration, levels of parental control, and parental substance abuse. These factors will be discussed in further detail, emphasizing the type of influence that family dynamics have on children and their antisocial behaviors.

Socioeconomic Status and Maltreatment

Child and adolescent maltreatment has been a notorious predictor of juvenile crime. The most common form of maltreatment in the United States is neglect (Logan-Greene, & Jones, 2015). Neglect has been linked to an early onset of juvenile crime as well as the increased likelihood of chronic reoffending and recidivism (Widom, 2003). Neglect has been defined as the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide the basic needs of a child including food, housing, or guidance to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are endangered. Child neglect may also include educational, medical, or emotional neglect in which the caregiver fails to provide for the children's medical needs, ensure school enrollment and attendance, or provide emotional nurturance (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013).

Neglect has become the most commonly investigated allegation by child protection services, taking up approximately 78% of allegations. Breaking these down even further, 18% of allegations were due to physical abuse, 9% were due to sexual abuse, and 8.5% were due to psychological and emotional maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Adolescents who are more maltreated compared to those who are less maltreated in

regards to severity, prevalence, and duration, are more likely to commit violent crimes, be arrested, and recidivate (Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chiodo, & Killip, 2007). In fact, individuals who are neglected are 53% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile. (Widom, 1992). Neglect's effect varies by the age of the child, as well as the type of neglect that occurs. Compared to maltreatment that only occurs in one developmental stage, maltreatment that continues over time and throughout numerous developmental periods is linked with more negative outcomes, including increased delinquency (Thornberry, Ireland, & Smith, 2001).

Furthermore, a significant factor in regards to neglect is socioeconomic status. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration (2012) found that children who were in families of low socioeconomic status were at a significantly greater risk of maltreatment, abuse, and neglect. Children were considered of low economic status if the household income was below \$15,000 a year, their parents' highest education level was less than high school, or any member of the household participated in a poverty-related program (Dale, 2014). According to the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, children in low socioeconomic status families were five times more likely to be neglected by abuse than those that were not of low socioeconomic status. In conclusion, children that come from neglect and low socioeconomic status are linked to aggression, violence, and crime (Wilkinson, 2004).

Another attempt to explain juvenile delinquency based on neglect can be best supported through general strain theory. Agnew et al. (2002) proposes that the more that individuals are exposed to various types of strain, such as victimization, discrimination, peer abuse, and parental abuse, the more likely they are to engage in delinquent behaviors. These strains predict anger and, as a result, influence deviant behaviors. Potentially, these strains can have a significant impact on delinquency because they are more likely to have the features of "being unjust, high in

magnitude, or associated with low social control" (Moon, Blurton, McCluskey, 2008, p. 583)

There are three major sources of strain that can affect an individual's behavior and cause them to make irrational, defiant decisions. The first major source relates to situations that obstruct achievement of positively valued goals (Moon et al., 2008). This source focuses on the disconnection between aspirations or expectations and actual achievement. It also includes the disjunction between just and fair outcomes with actual outcomes (Agnew, 1992). This source is challenging for young individuals to understand. Although adolescents may have goals and ambitions for themselves or even for their family, if the family cannot supply nor support those goals, it is difficult for them to achieve what they are striving for, therefore, causing disappointment.

The next major source considers situations that remove positively valued stimuli (Agnew, 1992). This source includes the potential or actual loss of stimuli that is positively valued. These cases usually result from stressful life events such as the loss of parents or friends. The final major source occurs from situations that produce negative stimuli. This includes harmful stimuli presented to individuals such as emotional or physical abuse. According to Agnew (1992), individuals who are exposed to the second and third strain, both dealing with positive and negative stimuli, are more likely to commit delinquent behaviors. These behaviors are more often than not committed in an attempt to get away from or even end the negative stimuli. They are also committed in attempts to prevent, retrieve, or manage the loss of the positive valued stimuli (Moon et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Agnew (2001) elaborates on four characteristics within strain that are most expected to lead to juvenile delinquency and crime. The first characteristic applies when strain is seen as unjust, because anger is likely to result from the perception of injustice. An example of

this would be a situation where an individual experiences a disproportionate and extreme punishment for insignificant misbehaviors. This could also hold true in cases where there is falsified accusations which, in turn, forces the individual to feel that the strain was undeserved as well as unjust (Agnew, 2001).

The next characteristic—strain perceived as high in magnitude—tends to have a significant negative impact on juvenile's behavioral and cognitive abilities to cope in a noncriminal way. This magnitude includes several different factors, such as duration, centrality of strain, frequency, and recency (Agnew, 2001). A strain that chronically and frequently occurs is going to be perceived as high in magnitude and, as a result, have a significantly negative impact on that individual. Recent strains are assumed to have a more significant impact on the perceived magnitude compared to older strains, although Agnew states that some strain such as severe childhood strain may have ongoing effects on delinquent behaviors. The centrality of the strain is the degree in which it is interfering with an individual's activities, needs, values, and goals. The more the strain interferes with these characteristics the greater the magnitude the individual is going to perceive the strain (Moon et al., 2008).

The third characteristic of strain more likely to lead youth to delinquency occurs when low social control is associated with it (Agnew, 2001). When parental supervision and child-care is sufficient within a household, there is higher social control due to the higher levels of emotional and cognitive abilities within the individual and higher availability of financial and social support within the family. On the other hand, when strains become associated with low social control, children are more likely to dive into delinquency and crime. Lower socially controlled households are associated with severe parental discipline and abuse due to the

inability to cope in a non-delinquent manner and shortage of social and financial support (Moon et al., 2008).

The final characteristic of strain occurs when individuals utilize delinquent behaviors and crime as a coping alternative (Agnew, 2001). Adolescents that grow up in poverty, single-parent homes, or even abusive homes may not have the resources that other adolescents have. As a result, they tend to model criminal behaviors and have an optimistic attitude towards criminal coping. In order to manage and escape from these strains, adolescents will engage in delinquency and crime. (Moon et al., 2008).

All of these identified types of strain Agnew identifies are more apt to lead to delinquency because they more than likely possess key characteristics of strain. The strains that are most likely to lead to crime are parental rejection, child abuse, ineffective parenting, and failure to achieve core goals. Juveniles may engage in delinquency in order to manage, escape from, or terminate strain. (Moon et al., 2008).

Divorce and Delinquency

Divorce is prevalent in today's society. Since 2003, 56% of all custodial fathers and 43% of all custodial mothers were either divorced or separated (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Out of the total population of adolescents in state correctional facilities, three out of four of them have experienced parental separation, divorce, or parents that have never married (Price & Kunz, 2003). With this being said, many children will experience throughout their lifetime a period of time where they are raised in a single-parent family. Statistics have shown that parental divorce has been significantly associated with children's psychological strains, poor academic achievement, conduct troubles, as well as other troublesome outcomes. Out of all of these outcomes, divorce had its largest effect on children's conduct problems (Amato, 2001).

Compared to traditional family structures, children that are raised in separated families are 1.6 times more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors (Kierkus, Johnson, & Hewitt, 2010). Due to the fact that conduct issues have become a relevant issue pertaining to divorce, research has drawn in on specific theoretical perspectives that assist in explaining the increased risk of conduct issues.

The first theory suggests that the parental absence following the divorce is what explains children's outcomes. This absence causes children to experience a reduction in emotional and practical resources. Of course, this reduction is dependent on the initial level of parental attachment that was present prior to the separation (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Although in some situations these resources from both parents may still be there, they may not be as accessible as they were before. In regards to parental absence, research compared children's outcomes for children who experience parental divorce and children who experience parental death. This comparison was done in order to demonstrate the limitation of the absence perspective. The results found that parental death does not bring the same level of risk for children as parental divorce does (Emery, 1999). This comparison can be done, researchers argue, because a majority of parental deaths can be treated as a natural experiment, whereas divorces often are preceded by a period of family disorganization and disturbed marital relations. (Corak, 2001).

The second theory puts an emphasis on the adjustment that juveniles have to undergo with the remaining parent they live with. The quality of childbearing has potential to be compromised due to the stressors that parents endure throughout the process of a divorce (Murray et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier, the relationship the child has with the remaining parent prior to the divorce will impact the child's adjustment. It has been found that although

single-parenthood is a key contributor to delinquent behaviors, single-mother headed households have shown significantly lower rates of juvenile crime than have single-father headed households (Demuth & Brown, 2004).

The next theory to assist in explaining antisocial behaviors resulting from parental divorce is the parental conflict that occurs prior, during, and post divorce (Emery, 1999). It is difficult for children to adapt to changes outside the family much less changes within the family. As a child, it is also challenging to accept changes such as a parent moving out of the house or parental disputes children may encounter with new partners or even the divorced parent. To go along with this, research has also suggested that children view their parents' new partners as competition. This competition may be felt in their parent's attention as well as affection, which in the end can cause even more conflict amongst the child and their parent (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). Consequently, what a child may have felt was a secure, loving, and supportive system can transition to a disconnected, disrupted, and broken atmosphere instantly.

The fourth theory addresses economic hardship and the loss of a family income following a divorce. It is important to keep in mind that this could act as a confounding variable due to the fact that low socioeconomic status is also a predictor of divorce. Numerous researchers have found that single parenting under economic hardship conditions is characterized by the absence of reasoning when instilling discipline resulting in frequent use of restrictions and physical punishment (McLoyd, 2006). To go along with this, the increased levels of anxiety and depression that result from impoverishment may serve as a catalyst in regards to more punitive and inconsistent parenting. When children endure situations that root from financial struggles within the family, they may turn to deviant behaviors out of anger or resentment or committing crimes to simply survive (Murray et al., 2012).

The fifth and final theory discussed is the life stress perspective. This theory highlights numerous stressful events such as school and house moves, new marriages, as well as previously discussed theories (Amato, 1993). All of these stressors are important to grasp in order to understand children's post-divorce adjustment. An interesting point to this theory that authors have found is that it is not always the absolute number of traumatic events that a child goes through, but more the characteristics of these events. For example, the timing of the event, the age of the child, and individuals involved are factors that could impact the youth (Murray et al., 2012).

Cohabiting

Due to the commonness of divorce and the rate at which it is increasing, cohabiting has been on the rise. Cohabiting is defined as a household in which two individuals, who are considered a couple, reside together without being legally married (Stets, 1991). In the United States, it is one of the fastest growing family structures, with an estimated 12 million partners participating (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008). Approximately 40% of cohabiting households have children under the age of 18 that are living in these family structures (Simmons & O'Connell, 2003). Due to the ambiguous nature of the relationship amongst cohabiting parents, numerous researchers have found that parenting practices, on average, are poorer in general within cohabiting families. In fact, statistics have shown that individuals who reside within cohabiting families are expected to show a higher range of behavioral problems versus children who reside in other types of two-parent households (Manning & Lamb, 2003).

There are several different theories used to demonstrate cohabiting and its effects on juveniles. The first model—family stress model—considers all of the stressors that can affect an individual during their family development phase. The family stress model takes a look at the

different sources of tension that come about due to cohabiting. The first source is change in residency (Willetts & Maroules, 2004). Obviously, when two parents cohabit a change in residency will occur. A change in residency not only involves a change in the type of home, but also in neighborhoods, cities, and possibly schools. Another source of stress while adapting to cohabiting is the adjustment of new household members (Willetts & Maroules, 2004). Children become accustomed to a certain lifestyle and that lifestyle can be disrupted by new siblings and the lack of family support.

An additional source of stress is conflict, whether it is parent-child conflict or sibling conflict. It is difficult for a child to adapt to not only a new environment but also new people especially when these people are now considered "family." The final source of stress that naturally derives from cohabiting households is the unclear rights and responsibilities among each family member. When two families live together, certain obligations may change. These obligations could be in regards to discipline, support, and even just parent-child bonding time (Kierkus, Johnson, & Hewitt, 2010). If there is an only child that moves into a home with several other children, it may be difficult for that child to adapt to the dynamics of no longer being an only child. Cohabiting makes it difficult to find that initial understanding of rules and regulations within the household. This stability that has become a theme could possibly prevent pro-social development if it not present which may lead to the deterioration of a juvenile's well being (Crowder & Teachman, 2004).

A second perspective focuses on parental involvement. Research has found that cohabiting partners often engage in indistinct family roles that are frequently characterized by little to no trust and authority (Brown, 2004). Other empirical evidence has shown support of this stating that more negative parenting practices have occurred in cohabiting households (Manning

& Lamb, 2003). This lack of trust and negative parenting idea comes from the impression that marriage impacts the amount of investing that parents have in raising their children. Therefore, studies have shown there is not as much emotional attachment with parents that cohabit (Hofferth & Anderson, 2003). As a result, cohabiting families may be lacking when it comes to effective monitoring and supervision, ultimately leading to delinquency.

Finally, the last theory is represented by the selection model—an approach that children from cohabiting families become delinquent due to risk factors that occurred prior to their cohabiting living arrangements (Willettts & Maroules, 2004). The key variable that falls under the selection model is socioeconomic status. Researchers have found that cohabiting is more likely to be chosen by couples of lower socioeconomic statuses. To go along with this, cohabiting families are not typically as effective in sharing resources which often results in higher levels of material hardship such as food and housing insecurities (Brown, 2004). Compared to children who live in a home with two married, biological parents, children that live with cohabiting parents do not have the best financial outcomes. This, as a result, can cause several disadvantages with respect to negative behavioral well-beings (Apel & Kaukinen, 2008).

Statistically, the odds are 2.8 times higher for general delinquency in cohabiting families compared to traditional married families. As far as specific types of crime, families that cohabit are 2.1 times more likely to engage in violent crimes, 3.3 times more likely to commit property crimes, and two times more likely to engage in substance abuse crimes. As a result, it is found that when compared to living in a married home, or even a single-parent household, children from cohabiting families are at a greater risk of engaging in all four types of delinquency (Kierkus et al., 2010). In conclusion, researchers suggests that understanding the nature of the sociolegal relationships among family members is just as important as knowing who is

physically living in the home. In fact, some research suggests that it may be more important. Just living with "Mom and Dad," even if they are a child's biological parents, may not be enough to hinder delinquency if "Mom and Dad" are not married. (Kierkus et al., 2010).

Family Transitions

Rates of divorce continue to climb and are more common today than ever before, with approximately 50 percent of marriages ending in divorce (NEA Today, 1986). There has also been an increase in the number of single-parent households, stepfamilies, and nonparent families. A non-parent family would encompass grandparents acting as parents, other guardians acting as parents, or even foster parents (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008). The rise in the number of families cohabiting has reached its highest as well. Research shows that juvenile offending is 10-15% higher in children of broken homes versus children with intact homes. To go along with this, children with two-biological parent households have significantly lower rates of juvenile offending compared to those with one biological parent (Wells & Rankin, 1991). Furthermore, in general children who experience a family transition is associated with higher levels of delinquency compared to children living with two biological parents (Brown, 2006).

Family transition often alters family practices, and these changes associate with a decline in the well being of children, including delinquency (Amato, 2000). Transitions can include a change in resources, money, time, schools, neighborhoods, as well as family roles and routines which in turn hinder parenting practices (Hanson, McLanahan, & Thomson, 1998). Today, children are spending fewer years in married families than ever before, and it can be expected that most children experience numerous amounts of living arrangements throughout their upbringing (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). These living arrangements can bring a decline in parent's supervision levels, parenting involvement, monitoring, and closeness with their children

(Demuth & Brown, 2004). The most important factors throughout family transitions is the relationship of the parent and child prior to the changes. Studies have shown that children who have stronger relationships with their parents prior to a transition are less likely to have behavioral problems than the children who report poor parental attachment prior to the family transition (Schroeder, Osgood, & Oghia, 2010).

Parental Incarceration

More than 1.5 million children in America have a parent that is incarcerated at a federal or state prison (Glaze & Marushak, 2008). Children with incarcerated parents are at a higher risk for continuing an intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration (Huebner & Gustafson, 2007). Several different risk factors for children come into play but are not limited in regards to parental incarceration. These risk factors may include separation anxiety, loss of financial support, and even social stigma that may lead to rumors or bullying of an individual (Arditti, 2005). For example, children with incarcerated parents have been given the title as the "forgotten victims of crime," the "orphans of justice," or the "unseen victims of the prison boom" (Petersilia, 2005). As a result, these risk factors can lead to anti-social behaviors, poor academic functioning, as well as other depressive symptoms resulting in delinquency. Children with incarcerated parents are more likely than those without incarcerated parents to be members of an ethnic minority group (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008), probable to be exposed to parental drug use (Mumola, 2000), and likely to live in extreme poverty (Phillips et al., 2002).

Around half of the U.S. prisoners are parents of children under the age of 18 (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). To go along with this, 6% of mothers who were incarcerated had a spouse that was also incarcerated leaving children to foster care or guardianship of another family member or friend (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010). Additionally, a survey done in 2004, found the

percentage of age ranges of children who had parents in the United States prison systems. The survey found that 22% of the children were four years old or younger, 30% were five to nine years old, 32% were 10-14 years old, and 16% were 15-17 years old. (Glaze & Muraschak, 2008). The survey also displayed that 91% of the children with an incarcerated parent had a father in prison. Research shows that the gender of the incarcerated parent plays a role in the children's delinquent behaviors. Children who have an incarcerated mother have been found more likely to later become incarcerated than children who have incarcerated fathers. This statistic roots from the fact that mothers are more likely to have a closer, more nurturing relationship with their children than fathers, therefore, children tend to adapt to their mother's habits and behaviors more than their fathers. (Murray et al., 2012).

Researchers have analyzed the entire incarceration process and the effects that it has on children as well as the role it may play on juvenile delinquency later on. First, even before incarceration takes place, the initial arrest of a parent can take a toll on children and their psychological well-being. It can scare them, take them by surprise, and confuse them (Nijnatten, 1998). Arrests usually occur in the morning or night, and this is the prime time that families are all together. Depending on the time of the arrest, it can affect children in different ways. For example, if the arrest occurs at night and requires a forced entry, it is going to frighten children and possibly cause them to view law enforcement as intimidating. Negativity towards law enforcement can instill a sense of anger and consequently lead to delinquent behaviors (Braman, 2004). In one survey, out of 192 incarcerated parents, 40% of them reported that at the time of their arrest their children were present (Harm & Phillips, 1998). Additionally, in 27% of those cases, weapons were exposed. In only 20% of those cases the children received an explanation from the officers of what was going on with the arrest of their parents. In fact, when the parents

were handcuffed, in only 3% of the fathers' arrest and 30% of the mothers' arrest were the parents removed away from their children before being handcuffed, exposing everything to the children, regardless if it was violent or not (Harm & Phillips, 1998).

Following the parental arrest trial in court can be extremely anxiety provoking for families and their children. These court sessions can cause internal anxiety, confusion, and even anger for children. The outcome of the trial brings feelings of uncertainty due to doubts about what the future holds (Fishman, 1983). Children are not assured of their parent's availability throughout the trial, and may not understand the court's process. Therefore, the child may feel bewildered by the events. Due to the uncertainty of the trial outcome, usually alternative care arrangements are not made in advance for the children (Richards et al. 1994).

Research has provided four different sources of difficulty for children whose parent's are held in prison. The first potential source of difficulty is the social stigma that attaches to children and their families (Condry, 2007). This stigma of being a prisoner's child can lead children to rejection, peer hostility, as well as isolation. Many times families will attempt to keep incarcerations a secret from friends, neighbors, and work colleagues due to the rumors or bullying that may occur (Braman, 2004). Children are often pushed into a forced silence about their parent's incarceration, and this often causes more harm psychologically because it makes it difficult for them to receive the appropriate support from peers and other outside sources (Arditti, 2005).

The next source of difficulty for children is that often they are not given an open, honest, and developmentally sensitive explanation of the whereabouts of their incarcerated parent. In a study done by Sack and Sadler (1978), only one-third of children were told the whole truth of their parent's status, one-third were told a fabricated truth, and one-third were told lies. Research

has found that the more open and developmentally appropriate information is given to an individual whose parent is incarcerated the more likely they will have a secure attachment with their current caretaker than other children who weren't given any true information (Poehlmann, 2005)

The third source of difficulty for children is a shortage of dependable and intimate contact with the parent that is incarcerated (Murray et al., 2012). When children visit their parents in prison, the visitation can be limited due to costly long distance travelling, visiting times that overlap with family availability or children's school hours, and even undocumented proof of parenthood to get the visit approved (Murray, 2007). In other situations, some children do not have the transportation or an accompanying adult that will help transport them to visit their parents. In general, prisons are not child-friendly places, often causing distress on the child to visit (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). For example, to even get into the visitation room, children may be required to go through metal detectors, sniffed by animals, and sometimes even be searched. This procedure can frighten children and possibly cause them to have some sort of anguish towards officers who are enforcing these rules. After children get through security, they will not always be allowed to be in the same room as their parents depending on the prison and jurisdiction. If they are, they may be prohibited from physical contact, causing a damper on a child's reassurance of parental availability (Robertson, 2007).

The final difficulty for children with incarcerated parents is the change in care-giving arrangements and the reduced quality of care (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011a, 2011b). Prisoner's partners experience an emotional burden when left to care for children on their own. They can experience feelings of depression, loneliness, and exhaustion when trying to provide childcare and support emotionally and financially for the family (Richards et al., 1994). As a result, the

supervision and attention of the child's needs may be weakened due to the stress of the caregiver through the parental incarceration. The psychological stress that the caregiver has not only affects them but also affects the children.

Families and children may also experience difficulties when their incarcerated parent returns to the community. The child may have adapted to the new roles and expectations of their home while their parent was in prison (McDermott & King, 1992). On top of this, ex-prisoners face significant difficulties to successful reintegration that could inflict further burdens on the children and family. In conclusion, parental arrest, trial, incarceration, and the return home can all cause multiple difficulties for children and their family. Parent-child separation and the quality of care (Poehlmann, 2010), social and economic strains (Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2011), reduced parental monitoring and involvement, changes in discipline (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011a), and stigma and labeling processes all impact a child's well-being and are critical points for children's development (Murray, 2007).

Parental Control

Throughout criminological literature, parental monitoring is noted instrumental in regards to the development of juvenile offending. Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) reported that the concern of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency is most strongly predicted by parental monitoring. In fact, parental monitoring has been reported to be a stronger factor than parent's marital status, parental discipline, parental criminality, as well as parental neglect. Parental control can be defined as the monitoring and supervision, punishment (Hair et al., 2008), control of free time and clothing (Seydlitz, 1993), and decision-making amongst a parent and child (Harris-McKoy & Cui, 2013). Although research entails the concern of low parental control and the influence it has on delinquency, there is also a disagreement amongst researchers on the

impact of high levels of parental control (Nye, 1958). On one end of the spectrum, research has shown that lower levels of parental control allows children to have an increased amount of unsupervised time which allows more opportunity to participate in delinquent activities (Barnes et al, 2006). On the other hand, although higher levels of parental control provide more supervision and structure, some children perceive too high of control as “excessive, unfair, selective, or rejecting,” and as a result the impact of discipline is attenuated or reversed (Wells, 2010).

Children are easily influenced and sensitive to their surroundings throughout periods of their development. Nye (1958) suggested that parental monitoring and direct controls are effective up to the point to where they interfere with the expected peer group behavior. If parental control is too restrictive, juveniles may attempt to gain power and autonomy by performing rebellious behaviors through engaging in delinquent behaviors (Wells, 2010). Conversely, it is easy to blame the lack of parental control when adolescents engage in delinquent behavior. Parents may feel the need to increase their control over their adolescents choice of friends, activities, and time in order to decrease the likelihood of delinquent behavior. However, moderate amounts of parental control can give adolescents the structure and autonomy they need to develop (Nye, 1958).

Parental Substance Abuse

Research has shown the single most potent risk factor in parenting is their substance-abusing behaviors (Johnson & Leff, 1999). In America, 10% of adults as well as 3% of adolescents are addicted to either alcohol or other drugs (U.S. Department of Health, 1993), and more than six million children live with at least one of these parents that abuses alcohol or drugs (Office of Applied Studies, 2002). Researchers have found that teenagers are more likely to use

drugs and drink alcohol if their parents drink and/or abuse drugs (Coombs & Dickson, 1981). In fact, 82% of families that drink will raise youth that also drink. In contrast, 72% of families who did not drink raised children who refrained from alcohol (Kandel, Kessler, & Margulies, 1978). Studies have shown that there is a same-sex, same-use pattern that appears to exist. This pattern recognizes that mothers and daughters tend to stick to mostly tranquilizers and painkillers while fathers and sons tend to stick to alcohol and cigarettes (Annis, 1974). Regardless of the choice of alcohol or drugs, substance abusing behavior of both the father and the mother directly influence their children's substance abuse behaviors, which in turn causes children to be particularly vulnerable to the risk of maladaptive behaviors (Johnson & Leff, 1999). These maladaptive behaviors include aggression, truancy, property destruction, oppositional defiant disorder, criminality, and conduct disorder (Grekin, Brennan, & Hammen, 2005).

Researchers estimated that substance abuse amongst parents contributes to maltreatment in 33-80% of the cases that are handled by child welfare agencies (Semidei, Radel, & Nolan, 2001). When compared to other children within the child welfare system, children from substance abusing parents tend to be younger, from residential areas of dangerous neighborhoods, and victims of severe and chronic neglect (VanDeMark et al., 2005). Children who have been placed in the child welfare system due to parental substance involvement make up 9-29% of the children who engage in delinquent activities.

Drinking becomes a primary factor in family disruption, and children that are raised in this dysfunctional environment have higher odds of abusing alcohol and other drugs, as well as higher rates of depression, antisocial personality traits, and anxiety. These conflicts can be caused by poor home management, lack of family communication skills, as well as lack of parenting (Paterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). Due to these conflicts, children are deprived of

certain modeling and training of parenting skills leading to unhealthy family dynamics. Specific characteristics that have been found to be affected due to alcoholic families is increased emotional or physical violence and family conflict, decreased family organization and family cohesion, as well as increased family stress, isolation, marital strain, and financial problems (Kumpfer & DeMarsh, 1986). Additionally, there are more frequent family moves that occur. With these moves children often have to change schools, which has resulted in lowered academic and intellectual functioning (Knop, Teasdale, & Schulsinger, 1985; Rimmer, 1982). This lowered functioning occurs because children of alcoholic parents tend to receive less amounts of help with their schoolwork at home.

In order to better understand the types of insight that children with alcoholic parents have, Wegschieder (1981) created the family role identification theory that addresses alcoholism. This theory has become the major paradigm for clinicians as well as researchers. The family role identification theory labels these children as four different possible roles—the Hero, the Scapegoat, the Lost Child, and the Mascot. These four family role identifications initially emerge due to persistent feelings of anger, confusion, rejection, loneliness, resentment, and confusion (Murphy, 1984). Children typically adapt to one type of characteristic as the child observes the family and their interactions. This process also includes the family's rules and expectations of the child and the way the child responds to these principles. Over time, children will be exposed to certain feedback from inside and outside of the family due to their decisions. The child will eventually pick up on which behavior fits the expectations most accurately for the needs of their family (Huberty & Huberty, 1986). This will result in children limiting the behaviors that aren't beneficial for their family and instead focus on whatever behaviors gain personal results for the family, and this is when the child will adapt to a certain family role, such as the Hero, the

Scapegoat, the Mascot, or the Lost Child (Veronie & Fruehstorfer, 2001).

The child that appears serious, competent, and at times overachieving to others is the Hero. At the same time, this child also feels guilty and insufficient—as if what they bring to the table is never enough. This child adapts to a wide variation of care-taking behaviors, usually gaining responsibilities that are far greater than children of their age. The feedback of others is what the Hero relies on for self-validation. Due to the dangers of relying on others for confirmation, the Hero becomes dangerous as they are maturing and may not sustain the appropriate amount of feedback or may receive feedback that is negative and discouraging (Veronie & Fruehstorfer, 2001).

Wegschieder (1981) then discusses the Scapegoat—the child who typically has a defiant attitude and behavior that is oppositional. This child characteristically takes the opportunity to put the blame of whatever situation is going on within the family on another source other than the alcoholic parent. The Scapegoat is considered the family’s bad seed and as a result, is often blamed for the pessimistic atmosphere within the family home. Because this individual prefers activities outside of family events, they will most likely adopt their surrounding peer group’s values. This adopting behavior tends to happen at an earlier age than more children and often leads to destructive, anti-social behaviors (Veronie & Fruehstorfer, 2001).

The next family role that individuals may adapt to is the Lost Child. This individual is withdrawn to solitary activities that are outside of family members. Due to the wandering and isolated behaviors, these children do not usually develop appropriate social skills. As a result, this individual balances out their behaviors through configuring a “vital and active fantasy life” (Veronie & Fruehstorfer, 2001, p. 54).

Finally, the Mascot solely relies on humor to cover up any situation where there may be

uncomfortable feelings, situations, or thoughts. This individual has a persuasive influence on others and because of this, is able to manipulate others into getting what they want or need. This can become a dangerous behavior to adopt due to the fact that anti-social behaviors can result from these traits (Veronie & Fruehstorfer, 2001).

The next factor leading to juvenile delinquency is parental drug use and its effects on children as well as the relationship between drug abuse and interparental violence. As mentioned earlier, children who live with parents who abuse substances or are dependent on them are at an increased risk of delinquent behaviors, specifically behaviors such as truancy, property destruction, aggression, conduct disorder, criminality, as well as oppositional defiant disorder. Research has shown that between 44-85% of parents that abuse substances retain custody of their children (Grella, Hser, & Huang, 2006). On top of this, 37-57% of these drug abusing mothers and fathers have minor children that are living with them (Doane, Kelley, Neff, & Cooke, 2008). More often than not these drug-abusing parents live in neighborhoods that are typically disadvantaged urban areas that present additional risk factors for children (Substance Abuse Administration, 2004). Children of parental substance-abusing behaviors are at risk for feelings of anxiety, poor self-concept, depression, and aggression (Osborne & Berger, 2009).

Another body of research is the cohabiting effect that parental substance abuse and intimate partner violence play on children. About 15.5 million children live within families in which intimate partner violence has occurred at least once within the previous year. Of these 15.5 million, 7 million of these children were predicted to have lived in families in which the violence was considered severe. In the U.S., 29.4% of children live in partner-violent homes and 13.3% live in homes with severe violence. Also, in 43% of cases, children were present for the violence, and 81-95% of children saw or heard the violence (Fusco & Fantuzzo, 2009). In order to link the

two variables of drug abuse and partner violence together, studies show that 92% of partners who engaged in this violence used drugs or alcohol on the same day of the episode (Brookoff, et al., 1997). Children of all ages are impacted by intimate partner violence. This exposure links children's proneness to violent, aggressive, and delinquent behaviors (Baldry, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, approximately 1.9 million individuals under the age of 18 are arrested each year (OJJDP, 2011). Due to these high arrests, the role of family dynamics and structure in accounting for delinquency has been a dominant topic of criminology over the past half century. The question of whether or not children who are raised in non-traditional families are at an increased risk of delinquency has been the focus of numerous studies (Hoffman & Johnson, 1998). Throughout all studies done, numerous factors have been found to have an impact on why adolescents commit delinquent behaviors. Several significant factors such as parental incarceration, divorce, family structure, parental substance and alcohol abuse, and strains have been discussed thoroughly. At an early age, identifying specific risk factors such as these mentioned is an important issue in order to determine the reasoning of later delinquent and criminal behaviors (Lay, Ihle, Esser, & Schmidt, 2005). Quality care, which consists of a strong parent-child relationship, nurture, and support, is vital to leading a child to a successful future. When these characteristics are dampened, children suffer and are restrained from healthy psychological development, often resulting in deviant, unhealthy behaviors. This thesis aims to provide policies that can prevent adolescents from becoming unlawful juveniles and instead create a pathway for a supportive and successful future.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature shows various factors within a child's family dynamics that may cause them to engage in delinquent behaviors. This chapter describes the research methods that were used in the current study. These methods identify and describe a variety of policies that are used to decrease risk factors of juvenile delinquency that are present within a family's dynamics. This research aims to answer the following questions.

Research Questions

The first question seeks to identify specific policies that impact juvenile delinquency. Question 2 looks to identify the type of impact these policies have on risk factors dealing with juvenile delinquency that were discussed in the previous chapter.

1. What policies impact the identified risk factors for juvenile delinquency?
2. Do these policies have a positive or negative impact on risk factors?

Furthermore, question three seeks to discuss potential systematic changes to policies and programs in an effort to address the risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency.

3. What changes could be made to improve the impact of these policies on risk factors for juvenile delinquency?

The Design

This thesis uses qualitative research—an interpretive systematic method that emphasizes processes and meanings that are not measured in numbers. Unlike quantitative research that is often predictive, qualitative research is generally descriptive. With this study, qualitative research will be used to explore and gain an understanding of policies and programs that are used for juvenile's undergoing family dynamic issues. This type of research will provide insight to

whether or not these policies are helpful in a juvenile's well-being.

The specific type of qualitative research that will be used is thematic analysis. This form of analysis helps to identify patterns among the data. Following the collection of data, this study will organize a subsample of policies and programs based on how they correspond with the seven main themes previously discussed. For example, policies that address parents who may need rehabilitation treatment will be categorized under the theme of drug and alcohol abuse. Furthermore, families that qualify for a welfare policy will categorize under the theme of socioeconomic status and maltreatment.

Once each policy is categorized into a specific theme, the policy will be reviewed and analyzed as to whether or not it has a positive or negative outcome on risk factors with juvenile delinquency. After the policy has been interpreted, there will be a discussion that will follow on how these policies are important to apply in regards to the risk factors of juvenile delinquency. This discussion will include policies that are deemed successful, policies that aren't impactful, and what changes could be done to make the ineffective policies effective.

Definition of Themes

There are seven themes identified in the existing literature of family dynamics and the impact it has on juvenile delinquency. The following provides definitions of these themes:

- Cohabiting indicates that two adults are living together in the same home without being legally married.
- Divorce denotes an ending of a marriage by a legal process. This process can include an ending of marriage amongst biological parents or stepparents.
- Family transition is the transition of single-parent households to stepfamilies and even nonparent families. Non-parent families would include grandparents acting as parents,

foster parents, or even other guardians acting as parents. Family transitions can also include the actual physical transition of an individual.

- Parental control indicates the level of monitoring that a parent has on their child. This includes supervision, punishment, control of free time, as well as decision-making between a parent and their child.
- Parental incarceration refers to any kind of custodial confinement of a parent in jails or prisons. This does not include being held overnight in a police cell; it is more associated with long-term confinement.
- Socioeconomic status and maltreatment refers to the social standing or class of a parent or family based on income, education, and occupation and how it relates to the cruel or violent treatment of a child.
- Substance abuse refers to a parent that overindulges or depends on addictive substances, including drugs and alcohol.

Collection of Data

The themes that were previously defined are the themes that are critically explored and discussed using policies that relate to them. Due to the extensive amounts of policies that relate to each theme, there will only be a subsample taken. This subsample will be accomplished by identifying policies and programs up until there is a repetition in the components of the policies and programs previously described. Once a repetition has occurred, that number of policies will represent the subsample. These policies will include specialized treatment programs, public safety policies, rehabilitations, specific state laws, and trainings that are found using research through various online search engines. These search engines will include juvenile justice and child protection websites, government websites that provide state policies, private institution's

webpages, rehabilitation websites, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), and Child Welfare League of America (CWLA).

Next, the policies that are found will be analyzed using data provided by the programs that are offered. The data that is collected to determine if the program was successful or not is derived from various cases of children with risk factors and whether or not these policies reduced those risk factors. This data will include observations from the professionals who are working with the individuals who have an in-depth understanding of the policy. If it is a rehabilitation or counseling program, it could potentially include interviews that capture direct quotations about people's personal perspectives and lived experiences. Other policies may include statistics of successful outcomes or even a decrease in a child's antisocial behavior over time. The evaluation of these policies will be found in the literature within the specific program. If there is no evaluation within the policy, the program will be read and analyzed using detail of themes and whether or not the program had an effect on individual's risk factors that are addressed in the policy.

The goal of this study is to analyze this data and recognize the specific types of policies that are beneficial in regards to family dynamics and juvenile delinquency. This is important because studies show that continuity of offending from a juvenile into the adult years is higher for people who start offending at an early age (Farrington, 2007). With this being said, it is critical to start at the beginning of a juvenile's life by analyzing the family dynamics and specific risk factors that a child is encountering. This allows researchers to recognize trending patterns that may develop into criminal behaviors. It is important to grasp these patterns as well as implement policies for children to engage in in order to interrupt those potential antisocial behaviors that may be present instantly or later on in their life.

Limitations

Due to the subject matter addressed in this study, there are several unavoidable limitations that are present. Many types of reliability issues exist in qualitative research. The first limitation that occurs within this study is the interpretation of specific policies. In regards to a positive or negative outcome, one reader may interpret an outcome differently than another reader. For example, some may view certain policies as detrimental to the juveniles causing them to commit crimes. On the other hand, others may view it as beneficial for the good of the individual straying them away from criminal behaviors. As a result, researchers may find that the policy is successful but may not sufficiently impact the individual in all aspects of their situation.

The next limitation relates to the subsample that is taken. There is a mass amount of policies and programs that apply to the themes listed. This thesis will only account for the appropriate amount of policies until they are repetitive in describing the effectiveness and how they apply to the theme. This subsample is a limitation, because not every policy and program is accounted for. With this being said, certain policies that are not accounted for could have an impact on juvenile delinquents, but will not be analyzed and critiqued.

Another limitation is that some of the themes that are addressed may overlap each other. In other words, some policies and programs may address multiple risk factors making it difficult to interpret which policy should be used for that specific theme. For example, children who have incarcerated parents are going to deal with possible neglect, maltreatment, and maybe even parental divorce. This is an issue because implementing certain policies for juveniles with multiple risk factors, and not knowing the correct policy to use for that individual, could cause them to miss out on a program that is beneficial to them. For the purposes of the current study, each policy will be classified into only one theme. The features of each policy will be used to

determine which policy is the best fit.

The final limitation is the lack of evaluation on certain policies. Some programs may provide the evaluation and success rates of their program, but other policies may not. This, in turn, requires evaluation, interpretation, and analysis of the program on whether or not it is successful. This can create an issue because as mentioned earlier, individuals are going to interpret positive and negative outcomes differently. The following chapter will present the findings of the current study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Existing research has indicated that various types of family dynamics play a role on juvenile delinquency. Studies have shown that children who are placed in toxic family situations and upbringings often engage in criminal behaviors. This chapter provides a detailed presentation of the seven different themes previously discussed, and the programs and policies that match these themes. This chapter also addresses the research questions presented in previous chapters, with an overall focus on how these policies and programs play a role on juvenile delinquency. Each theme that is acknowledged is thoroughly discussed on what the policy is, its goal, and the impact it has on children and delinquency.

Table 1 represents each theme and program that is associated with that theme. It also includes the evaluation, if any, of each of the programs that are discussed in this chapter. This table displays a subsample of the existing programs and policies that are appropriate for specific family dynamics and juvenile delinquency. The evaluation column allows individuals to see what programs have been found to be helpful in regards to children and delinquency. It also shows what programs have been found to be inconclusive. Finally, it displays programs that do not have an evaluation. The following sections in this chapter thoroughly discuss the programs and policies provided in the table and how the evaluations were concluded.

Table 1

Effect of Policies and Programs

Theme	Policy/Program	Evaluation
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)	Positive effect
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)	Positive effect
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Child Protective Services (CPS)	Inconclusive
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS)	No evaluation
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Healthy Outcomes Through Prevention and Early Support (HOPEs)	Positive effect
Socioeconomic Status & Maltreatment	Model Act Governing the Representation of Children in Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Proceedings	No evaluation
Divorce	Parent Education and Family Stabilization Code	No evaluation
Divorce	Texas Cooperative Parenting Course	Positive effect
Divorce	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Effect varies state to state/Inconclusive
Divorce	Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP)	Inconclusive
Cohabiting	"Marriage Without Formalities" Code	No evaluation
Cohabiting	<i>King v. Smith</i>	No evaluation
Family Transitions	Assisting Children Through Transition-For the Children (A.C.T.-For the Children)	Positive effect
Family Transitions	Family Connex	No evaluation
Parental Incarceration	Parental Rights Code	Inconclusive
Parental Incarceration	Children of Inmates/Bonding Visits	Positive effect
Parental Incarceration	Parenting Inside Out (PIO)	Positive effect
Parental Control	Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies	No evaluation
Parental Control	Parent Project	Positive effect
Substance Abuse	Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship Code	Inconclusive
Substance Abuse	Odyssey House-Adult Residential Treatment Program	Positive effect
Substance Abuse	Odyssey House-Parent Program	Positive effect
Substance Abuse	National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW)	No evaluation

Socioeconomic Status and Maltreatment

The first theme to be discussed is socioeconomic status and maltreatment. The policy that is associated with this is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This policy was written under the United States Code whose purpose is to develop, operate, and expand child and family services programs, protect and promote the welfare of all children, prevent the neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children, and support at-risk families (42 U.S.C. § 67). The CAPTA is achieved through Federal funding to states, supplying sufficient funds for child welfare services, investigations, prosecutions, and grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Research has shown that the CAPTA has a positive effect on children. This is displayed through the 2010-2014 data that shows during this period there was a 21.3% decline in maltreated children in foster care. It also showed a 15.8% decline in children who entered care at age twelve or under. Finally, it showed that there was a 12.7% decline in young children placed in group homes or institutions. The CAPTA's evaluation does not include outside factors that may impact these statistics (Children's Bureau, n.d.). The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act is best represented in Texas by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. This department includes Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) as well as Child Protective Services (CPS). These two programs work together to achieve the same goal but have different approaches, therefore, they will be discussed separately.

Prevention and early Intervention is a developing service in Texas in which communities come together to prevent child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, truancy, and runaway youth. This prevention is accomplished in three ways. First, PEI manages community-based programs that prevent child abuse and juvenile delinquency. Next, it helps communities identify their prevention needs and enhances local services. Finally, it creates new programs within the

community by enhancing the existing ones that are in place for improving outcomes of children, youth, and their families.

Research states that the most cost-effective and best way to stop delinquency is to intervene in a youth's life as early as possible. Early prevention has a positive effect on children because it supports healthy development of youth and prevents the onset of delinquent behavior (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.). To go along with this, research also shows that prevention and early intervention policies are more effective than reactive approaches on visible and longstanding disruptive behaviors (Prevention and Early Intervention, n.d.). Furthermore, the Office of Child Safety works with PEI in the prevention and intervention programs by completing critical case reviews, examining data and trends, and working with other agencies within Texas. The Office of Child Safety also helps bring together local agencies, private sector, non-profits, and government programs to reduce child abuse and neglect (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.).

The next service to complement PEI under the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is Child Protective Services. This service is more reactive whereas Prevention and Early Intervention is proactive. The responsibilities of Child Protective Services is to investigate reports of abuse and neglect of children, provide services to children and families in their own home, place children in foster care, as well as provide services within the foster care. CPS deals with four major types of child maltreatment, including physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Once the abuse has been reported, CPS will determine what program will work best for the children's interest and their family. Research has shown that CPS has improved cases in certain areas but also had no effect on other cases. Statistics state that over the last 25 years, reports of physical abuse have declined by 56% and

sexual abuse has declined by 62%. On the other hand, there has been little or no decline in two other factors. These factors include the number of families that report to child welfare agencies because of alleged neglect as well as the percent of children living in poverty. Evaluations within CPS evaluate that statistics decreased, but do not include other factors that may have impacted these statistics. Overall, CPS has been found to be inconclusive due to the diverging statistics.

CPS offers Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) that attempts to strengthen the ability of families to protect their children and reduce threats to their safety. FBSS can help avoid the need to remove children from their home or, if children are removed, to make it possible for children to return to their home safely. CPS uses in-home services in order to help families maintain a stable and safe home as well as reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. When children cannot live safely at home, a court of law can give the State of Texas temporary legal custody. Once this is in place, CPS places these children in foster care. Foster care is meant to be temporary until a permanent living arrangement is found. While children are in foster care, CPS works closely with families to make it safe for children to return permanently to their parents (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.). Due to Family-Based Safety Services having various services available, there is no specific evaluation of FBSS as a whole. On the other hand, based on the purpose and goals of the policy that focus on children's safety and well being, it could be concluded that it has a positive impact on children.

A specific program that qualifies under Texas Prevention and Early Intervention is HOPES. HOPES stands for Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support. The goal of Project HOPES is to establish flexible, community-based child abuse and neglect prevention programs targeting families of children ages 0-5 who are at-risk for abuse and neglect. This program is based on the belief that child abuse and neglect is a community problem that impacts

everyone. It also believes that child abuse and neglect is a vicious cycle that cannot be fixed by the CPS system. Finally, it thrives on the idea that children and families need ongoing community support in order to be successful. HOPES attempts to reduce the abuse and neglect of children by empowering local communities to build effective prevention services and coalitions through financial resources, obtaining data, and offering the flexibility to choose the evidence-based programs that meet the needs of the local community.

HOPES analyzes three different variables of a child's well-being within their home in order to see if they qualify for the program. First, it looks at the extent to which a child is free from fear and secure from physical or psychological harm within their social and physical environment—also known as safety. Next, it looks at stability which is the degree of predictability and consistency in a child's social, emotional, and physical environment. Finally, HOPES examines the nurturing aspect, and whether or not a parent or caregiver is available and able to sensitively respond to and meet the needs of their child (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.).

The evaluation of HOPES revealed that there are three program strengths. The first strength is that a parent education program is very well liked by staff and clients. The second strength is that staff developed strong, trusting relationships with parents. The third strength is the supplemental services like case management and counseling that are available to benefit families (HOPES Evaluation FY2015, 2016). An evaluation also found the program was successful in increasing protective factors in families and assisting communities in the prevention of child maltreatment (HOPES FY2015 Evaluation Findings, n.d.).

The final policy that corresponds with socioeconomic status and maltreatment is The Model Act Governing the Representation of Children in Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency

Proceedings. This policy gives attorneys clear guidance on representing the most vulnerable children. The implementation of this act ensures that children that come from all types of abuse and neglect can have the best representation. Health and Human Services suggest that appointing counsel for a child promotes the child's best interests. The child's lawyer's duties, amongst many others, are to interview and counsel the child, explain the lawyer's role, observe the child's interactions with the parents, be consistent with both confidentiality and the child's legal interests, and ensure that the child's health, mental health, educational, developmental, and placement needs are met (Khoury, 2012).

Prior to the Model Act, states have not been consistent in child attorney governance, and there has not been a federal mandate beyond the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act's requirement to appoint a guardian ad litem (GAL) for a child in order to receive federal funds for child abuse prevention and treatment programs. GALs are non-lawyers that are appointed to represent what they think is best for the child. This became lacking in uniformity due to the GAL attempting to represent the child but missing the tools to legally represent the child. Instead the Model Act was passed, giving legislatures concrete language to adopt that provide uniform guidance to lawyers that are representing vulnerable children (Khoury, 2012). There are basic requirements that the Model Act provides. Every child is a party to the dependency action. As early as possible, every child is appointed a lawyer. The child's lawyer has access to all confidential information including health, mental health, education, social services, and other information relevant to the proceeding. The judicial officer may appoint a best interests advocate who does not function as a lawyer that may assist the court in determining the best interest of the child (Khoury, 2012).

It is important to understand that the lawyer does not speak for the child but instead

counsels and advises the child by providing all the information, consequences, and possible outcomes that will assist the child in making decisions. The Model Act establishes that each child has the right to notice and to attend and fully participate in all hearings that are related to their case. If the child is not present, the court is required to determine whether or not the child was given proper notice, if the child wanted to attend, whether there was transportation for the child, and why the child is not present. If the child wants to be at the hearing and is not transported, the Model Act requires the court to postpone the hearing until the child is able to attend. In conclusion, children have been marginalized for years in abuse and neglect proceedings. Representation equal to other parties in the proceedings is the only way to ensure the children's voices are heard and their rights are protected (Khoury, 2012). The Model Act Governing the Representation of Children in Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency Proceedings does not have a research evaluation. Based on the policy's implications and the legal protection of children, it can be concluded that this policy has a positive impact on children.

Divorce

The next theme is divorce, and the policy pertaining to this begins with the Texas Family Code on Parent Education and Family Stabilization Courses (TPC § 105.009). This statute states that in a case that affects the parent-child relationship, whether it is for the possession of or access to a child, the court may order the parties in the case to attend parent education and family stabilization courses. This order is dependent on if the court determines that it would be in the best interest of the child. Both parties are not required to attend the course together, especially if there has been violence within the family in the past. The course is required to be at least four hours but no more than 12 hours and designed to educate and assist parents in regards to the consequences of divorce on parents and their children (TPC § 105.009).

The course must address the emotional effects that divorce has on parents, the emotional and behavioral reactions that children and adolescents may have towards divorce, as well as parenting issues that relate to the concerns and needs of children at different developmental stages. It must also address information on stress indicators in young children and adolescents, conflict management, and family stabilization through the development of a co-parenting relationship. Finally, the course must include the financial responsibilities of parenting, family violence, spousal abuse, child abuse and neglect, and the community services and resources that are available to the parents and children (TPC § 105.009). This policy does not have an evaluation but based on the information addressed and the goals of this policy, it can be concluded that it has a positive impact on children.

A course that is qualified under this statute is the Texas Cooperative Parenting Course. In 1998, this course began as the Child Access and Visitation Program that was offered through the Travis County Domestic Relations Office (DRO) in Austin, Texas. Originally it was administered in a classroom but eventually was moved online. This course is offered to everyone but specifically focuses on divorcing parents, separated, divorced, or never married parents experiencing conflict in regards to access, visitation, and custody of children. This course has a positive impact on participants because they learn how divorce impacts the family and the ways that they can help their children recover. They learn ways to restructure the relationship from "Husband" and "Wife" to "Co-Parents." They also learn positive co-parenting strategies for raising well-adjusted children in two homes, skills to communicate effectively and end conflict by managing anger, as well as guidance in finding additional resources ("Texas Parenting Course," 2010).

Another policy that addresses the prevention of divorce is the Temporary Assistance for

Needy Families (TANF) program. This program is supported under the United States Code for Providing Grants to States in order to increase the flexibility of States in operating programs for needy families (42 U.S.C § 601). Created in 1996, the program was previously called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) but became TANF through the welfare reform legislation. The design of TANF began by creating four purposes for the program. The first purpose is to provide assistance to families in need so that the children can be cared for within their own homes. The second purpose is to reduce the dependency of parents in need by promoting marriage, job preparation, and work. The third purpose is to prevent and reduce the frequency of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. The fourth and final purpose is to encourage the formation and continuance of two-parent families ("Policy Basics," 2015).

The only core requirement for states to receive the funds is that the state must spend the state funds on needy families. States are ultimately responsible for determining who is eligible for the TANF benefits and services. Generally, states must use TANF funds to serve needy families with children but are able to set different eligibility limits for different TANF programs or services. States may use their TANF funds for a range of services and supports that include income assistance, education and job training, child-care, transportation, aid to children at risk of abuse and neglect, and a variety of other services that help low-income families. For example, states can limit the amount of TANF cash assistance that is provided to very poor families while providing TANF-funded child care or transportation assistance to working families with slightly higher incomes ("Policy Basics," 2015).

TANF does not have an evaluation based on the policy as a whole. This is due to the fact that funds are distributed differently throughout the states depending on the states requirements and qualifications. To briefly illustrate the impact of TANF, in 1996, there were 4.5 millions

families nationwide that were receiving welfare checks. By 2003, there were only 2 million nationwide receiving checks. As a nation, that is a 44% drop within seven years (DeParle, 2009). This trend demonstrates that there was a decrease in individuals who needed these funds. It also demonstrates there are higher work percentages amongst individuals. Furthermore, overall poverty levels among single mothers dropped from 42% in 1996 to 33% in 2000 (Jencks, 2005). Based on these statistics, it can be concluded that there is potential for TANF to have a positive impact on individuals.

The next program associated with the theme of divorce is the Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP). This preventative program is a school-based 10-week group program focused on children of divorce from kindergarten to 8th grade. This program creates a supportive group atmosphere where children are able to share divorce-related feelings, clarify misconceptions, and moderate feelings of isolation. The goals of this program are to minimize the emotional and behavioral problems that may often result when children experience divorce. It also aims to increase children's ability to identify and express their divorce-related feelings appropriately. Furthermore, CODIP strives to reduce children's anxiety about family circumstances that can interfere with academic achievement ("Children of Divorce," n.d.). Finally, it strives to build competence by teaching problem-solving, communication, and anger control skills in order to help children cope with challenges presented by parental divorce (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985).

Through this program, children are able to clarify misconceptions about the divorce and reduce their sense of responsibility for parental conflict and/or a parent's maladaptive behavior. Children are also more likely to express significant feelings and build bonds because it is a group setting among children that have experienced similar situations. This experience allows children

to discuss significant personal concerns they have directly with their parents which leads to changes in feelings and behaviors that promote positivity to their home situation (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985).

On the other hand, providing a supportive environment in helping children identify, express, and deal with relevant feelings may not itself be enough to produce positive program outcomes (Cantor, 1977). Attaining specific competencies for dealing with the challenges that parental divorce poses coequal need between the parents and the children. Although this may be true, research evaluations suggest that the program does have positive outcomes by enhancing children's abilities to cope with the stressful experiences that are associated with parental divorce (Alpert-Gillis, 1989). The communication and anger control skills that the program offered can't always be applied in every situation that the child is put in outside of the program. The program is able to strengthen these attributes but cannot necessarily "fix" the other issues that are accounted for throughout the divorce which could be considered a weakness to this program (Alpert-Gillis, Pedro-Carroll, & Cowen, 1989).

Cohabiting

The next theme, cohabiting, has been around for decades, but since the 1970s has dramatically increased with the number of couples that participate in this phenomenon ("Cohabitation," 2003). Due to the recent burst in cohabitation, there are minimal amounts of policies and programs addressing this situation. The only two states that have passed laws requiring written contracts for cohabiting are Texas and Minnesota. The Texas Family Code considers cohabiting as common-law marriage, or in legal terms, "Marriage Without Formalities." According to this policy, proof of informal marriage has several different factors that are considered (TFC § 2.4010).

In Texas, a declaration of marriage for individuals over the age of 18 has to be signed, and the man and woman have to agree to be married. After the agreement of marriage, the individuals must agree that they live together in Texas as husband and wife and represent to others that they are married. The agreement for informal marriage must be declared by the county clerk and administered to each party. The document that is signed agrees that each individual claims that they live together and verbally represent to others that they are married. Following the signing of this agreement, Texas will recognize the marriage. With this being said, if one side of the party decides to separate from the other, they must go through legal divorce processes in order for the divorce to be legal (TFC § 2.4010). This policy does not have an evaluation but can still have a positive effect on the cohabiting theme by making the parent's relationship status clear and legal.

Another policy that affects cohabitation and children is the case under the United States Supreme Court, *King v. Smith*. This case discusses the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC) and whether or not the Social Security Act funds are made available for a "dependent child" who is housed by a non-biological parent. The Act defines a "dependent child" as one that has been deprived of parental support or care due to death, continued absence, or incapacity of a parent. In 1964, Alabama, as well as many other states following this case, publicized its "substitute father" regulation. This regulation denies payments to children of a mother who cohabits with an able-bodied man also known as a "substitute father." This regulation does not focus on what the dependent child's needs are. Instead, it focuses on the sole fact that there is not an absent parent in the household. As a result, this regulation goes against the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (*King v. Smith*, 392 U.S. 309). This amendment states that no state can deny a person within the jurisdiction the equal protection of

the laws (Hudson, 2002).

This case was overturned due to various policies within the AFDC as well as the Fourteenth Amendment. There are complications of the laws of "dependent children" as well as various factors within the Social Security Act on who qualifies for the funds. One of the factors that were solidified following this case was that children who are legally fatherless cannot be denied federal funded assistance. This applies to situations when a male presents the fictional thought that children have a "substitute father" by simply cohabiting with the child's mom. Just because there is a physical male in the house does not mean that he is playing the "father" role and sufficiently supplying sufficient needs for the child (*King v. Smith*, 392 U.S. 309). This policy does not have an evaluation but can still have a positive impact on children. This can be done by making sure the justice system is being fair to all eligible children and supplying them with the appropriate funds to survive.

Family Transitions

The next theme—family transitions—is represented first by the program A.C.T. (Assisting Children Through Transition)- For the Children. A.C.T.-For the Children is an interdisciplinary prevention program that is a collaborative effort of the Children's Institute in New York. The program is centered on encouraging parents to engage in behaviors that will promote a message of hope to their children and allow them to adjust properly to transition. A.C.T.-For the Children provides information about five specific topics. These topics include: 1) the legal process, 2) children's emotional reactions and developmental needs, 3) various ways that parents can reduce stress on their children, 4) strategies for renegotiating the parent's relationship, developing skills to have effective communication, conflict management, anger control, and problem solving, and 5) promoting positive relationships between the children and

their parents (Pedro-Carroll & Reynolds, 2000).

A.C.T.-For the Children uses role-play to encourage participants' involvement. The role-plays demonstrate techniques for transitioning relationships from those of former spouses and lovers to that of business partners who have a serious interest in their children. There is a focus on protecting children from toxic effects of a broken marriage by giving them a loving relationship from both parents. The program consists of two separate three-hour sessions that are scheduled one week apart. There are two experienced health professionals that are the presenters who facilitate the program's skills training component. A judge and a lawyer that specialize in Family Law conduct the legal component. Vignettes are shown throughout the sessions portraying ways in which children are caught in the middle of their parents' hostile moments. At this point, participants are encouraged to engage in problem solving as a productive way of handling conflict. The major focus on the program is to promote skills that emphasize the importance of protecting children from the toxic effects of these moments (Pedro-Carroll & Reynolds, 2000).

Discussing skills and techniques of handling certain situations is helpful but to actually practice them and apply them to real life scenarios has been shown to be even more effective. Presenters begin the scenarios by first discussing ways to handle anger and conflict effectively. Parents are then encouraged to renegotiate their relationships and view their status as business partners that share the same goal of improving their children's care, upbringing, and well-being. Parents who have participated in this program report their intentions of using the conflict-resolution skills that were taught in the program. These skills have later translated into positive behavior changes that improve their children's adjustments to the transitions concluding that the program does have a positive impact on children. It is important to note that this program is not

for everyone. Situations that involve domestic violence and child abuse are referred to more appropriate services (Pedro-Carroll & Reynolds, 2000).

Another policy for family transitions is Family Connex—an online family program that was developed by the National Family Resiliency Center. This program was created to help families that are facing divorce and other family transitions. The Family Connex plan includes various tools used for parents who have been married, cohabitate, never married, LGBT parents, and even blended families. The ultimate goal of Family Connex is to assist parents in providing the foundation of a healthy and collaborative process for everyone in the family by identifying each child's needs, and defining how these needs will be assessed through co-parenting (Family Connex, 2015).

The first tool used is the Child and Family Decision-Making model. This model assists parents in removing themselves from their own conflict and addressing the developmental needs of their children. This model also reflects developmental stages from infancy through late adolescence. It relates the phases to a child's psychological well-being, ability to learn and make decisions, and ability to have healthy relationships. This model exposes the possible impacts that family transitions can have on each stage of development and what parents can do to ensure that children have a healthy state of mind throughout these transitions (Family Connex, 2015).

The next tool used is the "About My Child" assessment. This assessment helps parents focus on their child's needs as well as their parenting strengths and weaknesses. This tool assists parents in finding a balance of care that is needed amongst both parents in making their child feel loved. Once the needs of the child/children are identified, parents are able to build a parenting plan for both parents. In the Family Connex program, this parenting plan is labeled as the "Parent Manual." This manual is a foundation of good parenting that addresses the challenges and

problems that may arise now or in the future. (Family Connex, 2015). This program does not have a research evaluation, but based off the tools offered and the goals that are in place, it can be concluded that it has a positive impact on children.

Parental Incarceration

The first policy in regards to parental incarceration is the termination of the parent-child relationship. In Texas, under the Family Code § 161.001, the court may order the termination of parental rights if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been incarcerated and unable to care for the child for two years. A termination action can remove the rights of one parent without affecting the rights of the other parent. On the other hand, if the rights of both parents are terminated, the State gains legal custody of the child. At this point, the State is responsible for finalizing a permanent placement for the child whether it is through adoption or guardianship (FAM § 161.001). This policy can be considered inconclusive due to the situation that the child may be in following the termination of their parental rights. Following custody of the State, some children may be placed in a living situation that they embrace and are comfortable in bringing them happiness and success. On the other hand, other children may be placed somewhere in which they feel neglected or uncomfortable, therefore, causing more problems for that child.

The next program that pertains to parental incarceration is Children of Inmates. This program is based out of Florida and helps to keep the lines of communication open between children and their incarcerated parents by transporting children to their incarcerated parent and encouraging them to create positive memories and moments. As a result, parents are able to rebuild lasting bonds for a lifetime. This organization provides referrals to social service partners that can best serve the needs of children and their families. It also offers support groups,

leadership training, and a range of social and support activities that are made available to children (Children of Inmates, 2008).

The main attraction to this program is the free quarterly Bonding Visits offered for children and their caregivers. At each three to four hour bonding visit children are able to sit with their incarcerated parents around tables in secure rooms and read books, put together puzzles, do arts-and-crafts projects, and play board games. Whatever activity is chosen to do, it is structured to encourage conversations, laughter, and hugs. The families are also able to enjoy a family meal and take part in a civics educational activity to, once again, create bonding and learning. Following each visit, children find stuffed animals awaiting them on the bus. Rather than going straight home, they are taken to either a bowling alley or skating rink as a way to ease feelings of anxiety due to separating again from their incarcerated parent. Trained counselors accompany the children and are available throughout these trips for guidance and support (Children of Inmates, 2008).

The Bonding Visits give considerable access for children to their incarcerated parents. These visits provide a safe, child-oriented environment that regular visitation in correctional settings cannot allow. Children are able to touch, hug, and be held by their incarcerated parent. If for some reason children are not able to visit their parent, other forms of communication are offered in this program. Since phone calls are expensive and cannot be made frequently Bonding Visits created video-conference visitations. These 30-minute sessions between children and their incarcerated parents are done through the computer, for free, from the Care Coordination Center to the correctional institutions. Families that participate regularly report positive experiences, and the children report having closer ties to their parent (Children of Inmates, 2008).

Since the opening in 2007 in Miami, Children of Inmates has become one of the nation's

largest providers for children of incarcerated parents. Surveys show that almost 90% of children engaged in this program are experiencing stronger bonds with their imprisoned parent.

Furthermore, over 70% of these children are engaging in pro-social behaviors. The Children of Inmates program has a positive effect because it has a lasting impact on the criminal justice system by keeping inmates from returning to prison. This in return also prevents the inmate's children from engaging in a lifetime of crime. This organization has won awards including the much-coveted Champions for Children Award for the innovative approach to helping children (Children of Inmates, 2008).

The next program that is incorporated with children and their incarcerated parents is the Parenting Inside Out (PIO) program. This evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral parenting skills training program began in 2007 in Oregon, but in 2008 the Children's Justice Alliance began marketing *PIO* to various departments of corrections. It is now used nationwide and has become one of the most popular programs that inmates can take. *PIO* was developed for parents involved in the criminal justice system, which includes being in prison or jail or on parole or probation (Clark, 2016). It was created for incarcerated parents through a six-year collaboration including scientists, practitioners, policy makers, and instructional designers. The way that the information in the program is administered and presented came from knowledge that was derived from research and practice. (Parenting Inside Out, 2017a).

PIO is different from the majority of the parenting programs that are offered due to the fact it emphasizes skill building. It is centered around learning and building skills versus being instructed by a teacher/counselor. It is also outcome-based so parents demonstrate their learning through role-play. This role-play is done with their children during phone calls and visits. After the interaction between the parent and their child, they then report back to the class on how the

interaction went and seek input from what their classmates and coaches believe worked or could have been done differently.

In order to simulate having a continuous responsibility of a child, the incarcerated parents adopt a stuffed bear. The parents are required to ensure that the bear is cared for, including finding child-care for the hours that they work. A corrections officer will take a bear into protective custody if it is found unattended. If this happens, the entire PIO class helps the parents develop strategies and analyze what went wrong in order for the bear to be returned to the parent's custody. Throughout this program, there are various topics that are covered. These topics include communication skills, problem solving skills, child and adult development, non-violent discipline techniques for child guidance, emotion regulation, and nurturing children through reading and play. Throughout this role-play program, parents will also be given effective directions, using positive reinforcement, transition planning, as well as family reintegration skills (Clark, 2016).

The curriculum of this program appears on numerous national-level best practice lists (Parenting Inside Out, 2017b). Additionally, participants of the program reported more positive family contact and were more likely to be involved in their children's lives. Participants were also more likely to use positive reinforcement and had lower parental stress scores than their peers who did not participate in the PIO program (Parenting Inside Out, 2017a).

Parental Control

The next theme discussed in the literature is parental control. The type of parental control a parent displays with children has an effect on children's behaviors. The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies offers a parent training that represents a therapeutic approach in which parents are taught various ways to manage their children's behaviors. These

parents are taught how to increase a desirable child's behavior, reduce children's misbehavior, improve parent-child interactions, and bring about a positive family atmosphere. This approach has been extensively researched, examining the parent-child interaction patterns and the way that children learn most effectively. Studies have consistently shown parent training to be effective in reducing conduct problems such as stealing, lying, failure to obey their parents, and fighting. Furthermore, these reductions in conduct problems have been shown to last years after the treatment has ended (*Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, 2017*).

Sessions can be conducted in various ways—either with an individual parent or with a group of parents. In these sessions, parents are taught how to carefully observe their children's behaviors so that they can better understand why their children act the way they do. They are taught how to observe what situations and events come before the behaviors and what commonly occurs following the behaviors. Parents are also taught how to effectively use a number of skills and techniques for improving their children's behaviors. These skills may include praise, positive attention, administration of rewards and privileges, rule setting, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out. Parents are taught when and how to use these skills and the proper timing, consistency, intensity, and integration of the various skills. The most effective skills used at the wrong time or in the wrong way will not promote appropriate behavior in children (*Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, 2017*).

Other areas that are frequently covered in this parent training program are establishing realistic expectations for children's behavior at particular ages, talking more clearly and positively with children, and working effectively with school personnel to help children develop academically and socially. Methods used throughout this training include verbal instruction, video and live demonstrations of the use of skills, feedback from therapists as well as feedback

from other parents. Programs that include more than 10 hours of training and leave open the maximum number of treatment sessions are more likely to show bigger and longer-lasting reductions in children's behavioral problems versus programs that are brief and time-limited. Parent training is a very promising treatment for child-conduct problems. Although there is no specific evaluation, studies show that no other treatment for conduct problems has been investigated as broadly or found to be as effective as parent training (*Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, 2017*).

The next program that is effective with children and their behavior is the Parent Project. This program has been developing for thirteen years and is the only course of its kind (Parent Project, n.d.). The mission of the Parent Project is to develop parent-training programs for parents that are raising difficult, out-of-control children, with destructive behaviors (Parent Project, 2016). The curriculum of the program is to teach prevention, identification, and intervention strategies to parents. These behaviors may include alcohol and drug use, gangs, violence, poor school attendance and performance, and runaways (Parent Project, n.d.).

Parents meet once a week for two to three hours a night for ten to sixteen weeks. Parents form support groups using a self-help support group model. In these support groups, the curriculum that is presented allows the parents to learn and practice specific behavior management techniques to use with their children to help prevent and contain certain behaviors (Parent Project, 2016). Topics in the class include ways to reduce family conflict and arguing, how to improve school performance and attendance, ways to identify and intervene with drug and alcohol abuse, how to intervene in negative peer associations, and assisting parents on how to set effective limits on their children (Parent Project, n.d.).

The Parent Project is the largest court-mandated diversion program within San

Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, and is also the only program like this that operates in multiple states. Furthermore, it is the only program with a formal training process that has a published, structured course that addresses the most destructive adolescent behaviors. The Parent Project is used by schools, police and probation departments, churches, mental health agencies, and volunteering parents. Evaluation research has shown that the Parent Project has reduced juvenile crime by 1/3 while drastically increasing school attendance and school performance (Parent Project, n.d.).

Parental Substance Abuse

The last theme that is analyzed is parental substance abuse. The policy that relates to substance abuse and children is the Family Code referring to the Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship. This policy discusses the involuntary termination of parental rights. It states that if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the child experiences specific alcohol or controlled substance abuse, they may terminate the rights of the parent. This termination includes a child who is born to a mother who used an illegal controlled substance during the pregnancy. It also includes children who experience withdrawal from alcohol or controlled substance after birth, exhibit signs of injury, or have alcohol or controlled substances within their body (FAM § 161.001).

Similar to the termination of parental rights due to parental incarceration, the same process applies to children of parental substance abuse. Children could be at risk by having their rights terminated depending on the plan that is in place for them. Children could potentially be placed in at-risk placements or homes. On the other hand, children could be placed in a home that allows them to be successful and productive.

Another program, Odyssey House, is an addiction treatment program that is all over the

United States. It offers both an inpatient and outpatient program for adults. The inpatient program, the Odyssey House Mothers and Fathers with Children Program, not only treats the problematic parent but also is dedicated to children dealing with the situation as well. This residential program treats single parents and their children together. This program allows parents to receive the appropriate drug and alcohol abuse treatment they need without having to worry about leaving their children behind. The parent receives comprehensive addiction and mental health treatment while children receive therapeutic daycare treatment for neglect, trauma, and abuse that they may have experienced from living with an addicted parent. Not only is there a program that incorporates children, but there is also a program for both parents if both are in need of care. One parent may enroll in the Adult Residential Treatment program while the other can enroll in the Parent Program (Odyssey House, 2016).

In the Parent Program, Odyssey House strives to provide a supportive family environment through an evidence-based Modified Therapeutic Community model, a model recognized by national agencies as a highly effective best-practice approach to parental substance addiction. Rather than just focusing on the outward symptoms of addiction, the Parent Program tackles the underlying causes of addiction by promoting comprehensive lifestyle changes. Not only do parents learn how to overcome their addictions, but they also learn how to be better mothers and fathers while living a healthy, sober lifestyle (Odyssey House, 2016).

Due to children's experience of parents living with drug and alcohol addictions, children may encounter feelings of emotional neglect, physical neglect, sexual abuse, abandonment and other emotional issues. The Odyssey House Children's Services Program was created to address these past traumas and attachment issues in order to give kids a chance to experience the rest of their childhood in a safe and healthy environment. The program is geared to teach children how

to trust, develop positive self-esteem, and build healthy relationships with adults and other children surrounding them. These programs are taught through therapeutic daycare services and provide children the individual attention they need through counseling and therapeutic activities specific to their age and developmental level. Children engage in daily recreational activities with their parent and with their class. These interactions allow children to learn what it's like to live with a sober mother or father as a happy, healthy family unit. Throughout therapy, children also have the opportunity to continue their education. Children attend school during the day and return to the program after school for therapy sessions and continued treatment (Odyssey House, 2016).

As parents and their children spend time together within the supportive therapeutic community environment that Odyssey House has to offer, they are able to rebuild the essential family structure of love and trust. After growing together throughout their time in treatment, families graduate from the Odyssey Single Parents with Children Program with a strong family bond through which they can further grow and develop.

Odyssey House's outpatient and inpatient services reflect the same criteria but are taught and managed in a different setting. The outpatient program is as rigorous as an individual wants it to be, meaning that it is a flexible program and patients are in control of what they choose to do. The outpatient program consists of 16 hours of group therapy and an individual therapy session weekly.

The Odyssey House program is a statewide, well-known program for individuals in various situations. It accommodates all types of different families. It is one of the most successful programs with the adult program showing 100% abstinence from alcohol, 100% abstinence from drugs, 0% arrest rates, and 82% employment rate following the duration of the program. The

parenting program had a similar evaluation showing 100% abstinence from alcohol, 100% abstinence from drugs, and 100% employment rate post-program (Odyssey House, 2016).

The next policy associated with substance abuse is the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW). It falls under the Department of Human Services and is funded by various departments such as the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, and Children's Bureau's Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. The mission of this policy is to advance practices and collaboration among agencies, courts, and organizations that work with families that are affected by substance abuse. These advances are done in hopes of improving family recovery, safety, and stability (NCSACW, n.d.).

There are four goals to this policy. The first goal is to organize policies and procedures that support joint practices, information sharing and coordination, program and cost efficiencies, timeliness of services, and joint accountability. The next goal is to promise children, parents, and families appropriate and effective services that will improve their well-being. The third goal is to develop a substance abuse and trauma informed system of care for the families that are involved in the child welfare and court systems. Finally, the last goal is to support multiple systems that develop competency in order to address family strengths and needs as well as apply the best practices and collaborations (NCSACW, n.d.). Although there is no evaluation on this policy, based on the goals and mission of this policy it can be assumed that it has a positive impact on the well-being of children.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses policies and programs that impact family dynamics and juvenile delinquency. Various types of policies were analyzed, including rehabilitative programs, federal

and state laws, counseling and training programs, as well as preventive programs. The main factor that was found within this chapter is that there are policies and programs available for individuals struggling with various family issues discussed in the literature review. In fact, because the themes discussed are so important for a child's well-being and development, some programs are not voluntary, but instead mandatory by court order. Some of these policies and programs have been around for decades and just altered over time, whereas several are somewhat new and have just had minor changes, making them more impactful.

The following chapter concludes this study and will discuss the implications that these programs have on current policy and research. Furthermore, the significance of the analyses and the impact that these policies have on juvenile delinquency will be expanded on in the next chapter. Overall, family dynamics and its effect it has on juvenile delinquency is important to study and understand in order to take preventative measures in how these deviant behaviors can be limited. Limiting these behaviors is important for society because juveniles that start off with criminal behaviors could turn into adult offenders, committing severe and heinous crimes.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

Over time, numerous factors have been found to have an impact on juvenile offending. Extensive research has found that the family structure has a vital connection to delinquency. This thesis explored those various family dynamic factors that impact juvenile delinquency and found policies and programs that are applicable in inhibiting antisocial behaviors. This study found that these policies are important for the child's future and current well-being. This next section will summarize each policy and program and the impact they had on risk factors of juvenile delinquency. Each policy and program that was appointed to the appropriate theme will be outlined on why they have the effect they have on children and delinquency.

Socioeconomic Status and Maltreatment

The programs and policies used for socioeconomic status and maltreatment were found to overall have a positive impact on children. Family-Based Safety Services and the Model Act were the only two policies that did not have evaluations, but it is safe to say that they were both implemented to provide a service for children that keeps them safe and protected. This was concluded based off of the intentions of the work that is provided and the clear objectives presented in order to protect a child's well-being and supply assistance for them.

Child Protective Services was the only policy found to be inconclusive. This effect was concluded due to certain statistics showing that cases have improved in certain areas but also worsened in others. Based on the intentions of the service and the fact that there is some type of positivity coming out of the service, it is still beneficial to continue these services. Although there may be certain factors that are not improving within cases, the Child Protective Services

cannot specifically be the one to blame for that. Instead, CPS needs to continue their attempts in protecting children from hazardous situations and providing a service for them.

The remaining policies and programs within this theme had research evaluations that deemed them positively effective based on their criteria and outcomes. These policies should continue their strive in bettering children and supplying outlets for their needs. These policies and programs are important for children because it gives children in helpless situations an opportunity to succeed and to be removed from hazardous situations within their home.

Divorce

The policies and programs selected for divorce were all found to have a different effect. As a result of the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Code, the Texas Parenting Course was implemented to provide knowledge for divorcing parents and the impact the divorce has on their children. Although the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Code did not have an evaluation, the Texas Cooperative Parenting Course had a positive evaluation. It can be concluded that since these two policies complement each other in seeking the best interest of the child, they both have a potential positive effect on children who are encountering their parent's divorce.

The other two policies in regards to divorce, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP), were found to be inconclusive. This conclusion was drawn due to the fact that the policies both have several positive outcomes but also demonstrate a few components of factors not accounted for within the policy. For example, TANF demonstrated that there has been a decrease in the demand of federal funding assistance. Although this appears to be a positive effect in regards to employment rates and decreased poverty, there are many other factors that could cause this number to decline. For

example, individuals could have gotten married, had other individuals support them, or even pulled themselves out of poverty. As a result, it is difficult to conclude that all of the success has resulted from TANF and not within the individual. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is still a recommended form of assistance because, based on statistics, it is evident that it is advantageous for children who come from needy families.

Along the same lines, the Children Of Divorce Intervention Program displayed specific goals for children that resulted in various positive outcomes within the program. Although CODIP may have touched on certain feelings and emotions of children of divorce, it is difficult to capture all the emotions that a child may feel throughout the entire process of a divorce especially since the program was a group setting. As a result, this program was considered inconclusive because it had a positive effect for the specific issues it covered in the program, but it could not necessarily include all the factors that a child will encounter outside of the program. It is still beneficial for this program to be implemented because it does give children a supportive environment and allows them the opportunity to express the feelings they are facing throughout the divorce.

Cohabiting

Cohabiting was limited as far as the policies and programs that apply. There were two policies—the Marriage without Formalities Code and the *King v. Smith* case—that were relevant to cohabiting and the effects they had on children. Neither one of these policies had a research evaluation, but it can be surmised that the *King v. Smith* case has a positive impact on children and delinquency. This can be concluded due to the fact that although there may be two parental figures in the home, children may still not be getting their needs adequately met. As a result, the *King v. Smith* case made sure that children were still granted their federal welfare assistance

regardless of who is living with their parent. The Marriage without Formalities Code does not necessarily have a positive or negative impact on children but more of a legal clarity of the marital status. This could at some point impact children if there is a legal dispute. Both policies were implemented for the clarity of rights for the children throughout this marital status.

Family Transitions

Family transitions was also a theme that was limited with the number of policies and programs that were relevant. One program, Assisting Children Through Transition-For the Children (A.C.T.- For the Children) was evaluated as a positive attribute towards children. This evaluation was found positive because of the relevant topic it addressed in protecting children from toxic effects that family transitions could possibly bring. Skills were taught from professionals to the parents to improve children's adjustments of family transition and, as a result, this program acquired a positive impact on children at risk. The other program discussed, Family Connex, did not have a research evaluation but could be assumed that the tools provided in the program delivered parents a foundation of assisting children through family transitions. These tools offered a foundation for a healthy and collaborative process for everyone in the family, therefore, implying that it had a positive impact on children and their transition process.

Parental Incarceration

Policies and programs created for parental incarceration overall had a positive effect on children and delinquency. Under the Texas Family Code, there is a possibility that a court may order the termination of parental rights if the court finds that the parents who are incarcerated are unable to care for the child for two years. This policy was found inconclusive because although the rights are given to the State, the living situation could trigger problems in the child if they are placed somewhere they are not happy or supported. On the other hand, children have potential to

be placed in an environment that is supportive of their situation and their future.

The next two programs, Children of Inmates/Bonding Visits and Parenting Inside Out were both evaluated as having a positive effect on children and delinquency. Both have been recognized as top programs for children of incarcerated parents because of the parent-child bond and more positive family contact. These programs should continue to provide services for children of incarcerated parents as well as parents who have been incarcerated in order to minimize juvenile delinquency.

Parental Control

Next, there are two policies that have impacted children in regards to parental control. The first one, Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies training, was a therapeutic approach that sought patterns of parent-child interaction and the most productive ways in which children learn. Although there was no research evaluation on this training, there was no other treatment in regards to conduct problems found to be as effective as the parent training. This, as a result, can imply that this training has a positive effect on children.

The next program, the Parent Project, is the only program of its kind--a program that forms support groups and uses a self-help support group model. These parental support groups learn different types of techniques from each other to use with their children to help promote affirmative behaviors. Research evaluations have shown an increase of school attendance and performance while reducing crime drastically. Consequently, this program has been deemed necessary in regards to parental control and its effect on children.

Parental Substance Abuse

The final theme substance abuse had several policies and programs that had an effect on children and delinquency. The only policy that was inconclusive was the Family Code referring

to the Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship. This was evaluated as inconclusive due to the risk of the child's placement following the removal of parental rights.

The next program, the Odyssey House, had two different programs--one for adults and one for parents with children. The Parent Program allowed both parents and children to receive treatment and still be connected to each other within the same facility. There was also an Adult Residential Treatment program for families with both parents dealing with substance abuse issues. Odyssey House's outpatient and inpatients services had the same criteria; they were just offered in different settings. This program is very well-known across the country and evaluation showed 100% abstinence following the treatment.

The final policy, National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, advanced practices amongst agencies, courts and organizations that work with families affected by substance abuse. There was no research evaluation but based on the goals to organize policies and promises given to children and their families to receive appropriate and effective services, it is assumed this policy had a positive effect.

Research Questions

Following the summary of the policies and programs of the seven themes discussed in this paper, this next section answers the research questions proposed in the first chapter.

1) What policies impact the identified risk factors for juvenile delinquency?

Research found that there were numerous types of policies and programs that impact the identified risk factors previously discussed in the literature. Policies were found through federal statutes such as the United States Code as well as state statutes such as the Texas Family Code. Other programs were found locally through the Texas Department of Family and Protective

Services or nationally through privately and federally funded institutions, rehabilitations, trainings, and grants.

2) Do the policies have a positive or negative impact on risk factors?

A majority of the policies that had evaluations were found to have a positive impact on juvenile's anti-social behaviors. The impact of the programs were based on whether or not they influenced children's risk factors leading to delinquent behaviors. Several of the policies did not have a research evaluation and, as a result, were evaluated based on the impact it had on risk factors presented in the policy.

3) What changes could be made to improve the impact of these policies on risk factors for juvenile delinquency?

Many of the programs that were deemed successful were programs that engaged the entire family instead of just the child or just the parent. One specific change that could impact at-risk children would be to alter these policies and programs to incorporate both the children and parents in the program in order to promote healthy family dynamics. Another change that could promote better outcomes for these policies and programs is to make some policies and programs mandatory whether it is through the courts or through professionals (mental health workers, teachers, doctors). Some of the policies and programs that were researched and analyzed were voluntary amongst anyone in the general population, and others were required through the courts. By requiring mandatory programs it could force children or parents to be a part of something that could promote positivity within the risk factors of juvenile delinquency.

Suggestions for Future Research

Research was plentiful for a majority of the factors discussed in the literature. However, cohabiting lacked in regards to the literature dealing with cohabiting affecting risk factors of

juvenile delinquency. Although cohabiting is not a new concept, it is somewhat new in connecting the phenomenon to the emotional effects that it has on children and how it may lead to delinquency. Limited research in regards to the impact that cohabiting has on children was found within other research dealing with marital status but was difficult to find data focused on cohabiting and delinquency itself. Until more research is dedicated to understanding the direct impact that cohabiting plays on juvenile delinquency, only assumptions can be made about the degree of impact it has. However, this thesis indicates based on the research available that the emotional impact cohabiting has on children can lead to delinquency.

The programs and policies that have research evaluations discussed the outcomes of the impact the program had on the parent or child. Although this is efficient when just looking at the program itself, there is more that should be examined in order to relate it to juvenile delinquency. For example, some of the programs that were discussed in this paper physically remove the parent or child from the home. The individual then goes through the program and potentially returns home. On the other hand, some policies remove the child or parent, and they do not return home. With this being said, it is vital that research includes the effect this removal may have on the child and the impact it plays on them emotionally. While there is research pertaining to the removal of the parent or child from the home, the evaluations in this thesis did not include these effects within these specific programs discussed. Until further research includes examination of the removal of an individual's effect on the child, it can only be assumed how just the program affects the child versus the absence of the parent or adolescent.

Limitations

There are several limitations within the results of this study that need to be addressed. First, it is important to point out that this study is a subsample of all policies and programs

applicable to each theme. There are more programs and policies available in regards to family dynamics and juvenile delinquency than those discussed within this paper. With this being said, the results that were found in regards to the policies and programs in this study cannot be assumed that they represent every policy and program implemented accurately.

Another limitation in this thesis is the restricted amount of research available for the cohabiting theme and the effect that it has on juvenile delinquency. The policies and programs in regards to cohabiting were very scarce. For future research to be more accurate in the effect that cohabiting has on children's antisocial behaviors, more policies and programs should be implemented to represent this theme more precisely. With this being said, this thesis generalized the evaluation of the policies available for cohabiting based off of the limited research available.

Furthermore, the evaluations that were provided on the policies and programs used were not all based off of research evaluation. For example, some programs were private institutions or rehabilitations whose evaluation came from within that institution. As a result, there could be a biased evaluation to allow that program to be perceived as more successful than it actually was. This bias could be done by manipulating the statistics of the program, not including certain participants in the results, or even influencing participant's opinions of the program. Additionally, some programs did not have evaluations and were evaluated based off of the assumption the impact of the program had on the child. It is important to point out that the evaluations that were drawn could be drawn differently amongst other individuals. Due to the lack of research evaluations, the reliability within some programs and policies are not as strong as they could be. It would be beneficial for future research to include more empirical evaluations that are not specifically internally based, but more scholarly researched, including outside factors that may impact the evaluations.

Finally, in this research some policies and programs were overlapping multiple themes, therefore, making it difficult to determine which theme each policy should be applied to. For example, children who have incarcerated parents are going to deal with possible neglect, maltreatment, and maybe even parental divorce. This is an issue because implementing certain policies for juveniles with multiple risk factors, and not knowing the correct policy to use for that individual, could cause them to miss out on a program that is beneficial to them. Although this paper only applied the policies and programs to one theme, it is appropriate to address that there is opportunity for them to be applied to more and potentially have a different impact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, family dynamics have been proven time and time again to have an impact on juvenile delinquency. For years, there have been numerous different policies and programs implemented in attempts to diminish these criminal behaviors. The goal of this research sought to identify a subsample of the most crucial programs and policies that were found to have an impact on children and delinquency. It was found that there are impactful policies and programs, some mandatory others voluntary, that has a role in juvenile delinquency.

Moving forward, many families are going to experience neglect, abuse, divorce, incarceration, and even arguments that could potentially impact a youth's developmental and emotional state of mind. When this happens, it does not mean that children have to suffer and find other forms of coping such as criminal behaviors. Policies and programs are available for all types of issues pertaining to family dynamics. These programs are implemented to have a positive impact on families and, as a result, turn children away from delinquency. It is important to bring awareness of these policies and programs to schools, courts, communities, and the media. Children are the future, and in order to have a nourishing and prosperous society, it is

vital to focus on what can be done for children growing up in toxic situations. Juvenile delinquency has a major impact on children's future, but can possibly be avoided if the right resources are made available to them and their family.

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