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Juveniles and the Criminal Justice System

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Juveniles and the
Criminal Justice System

by

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Department of Criminal Justice

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Topic Area Literature Review

Topic: Juveniles and the Criminal Justice System

Although juvenile crime rates have been decreasing rapidly in the last three decades, 2,805 children are still arrested each day in the United States (The State of America's Children®, 2017). A child should get to grow up feeling safe and secure, with room to grow and develop with the support of their families, schools, and communities. Of those being arrested, they are mostly children of color and those that come from lower income communities. After these youths are incarcerated, they are at risk of physical and psychological abuse, sexual assault, and suicide. They also lack proper educational instruction while in these facilities, which effects their overall growth (The State of America's Children®, 2017). Juvenile justice is an important topic because it is a problem we have been constantly dealing with. Adolescent crime behavior left untreated can result in more serious crime and antisocial activity.

The graduate capstone project includes the completion of four working papers. All four working papers will inter-related, linked together by the overarching theme discussed above as juvenile justice. The following introduces the topics that each of the four working papers will focus on. It also introduces a few important sources that will be used, and information on the intended data collection methods and analysis.

1. Juvenile Delinquency and Criminological Theories

This paper will be discussing the topic of juvenile delinquency and criminological theories. This research is important because by understanding and using criminological theory we can find possible treatments and understand the causes of juvenile delinquency. The paper

will include a thorough review of the current literature on criminological theories and juvenile delinquency. It will then discuss in detail three theories that are directly associated to the development of a juvenile: Social Learning Theory, Social Bond Theory, and Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas. The three theories will be used to explain juvenile criminal behavior. The paper will finish by providing policy recommendations and explaining the limitations of these theories. These recommendations can be used by policy makers to ensure a continued decrease in juvenile delinquency throughout the United States.

Low self-control, social bonds, and crime: Social causation, social selection, or both? (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999).

This article examines the social-selection and social-causation processes that generate criminal behavior. It describes three theoretical models: a social-causation model that links crime to contemporaneous social relationships; a social-selection model that links crime to personal characteristics formed in childhood; and a mixed selection-causation model that links crime to social relationships and childhood characteristics. They analyzed measures of childhood and adolescent low self-control as well as adolescent and adult social bonds and criminal behavior. They found that low self-control in childhood predicted disrupted social bonds and criminal offending later in life. They also found that social bonds and adolescent delinquency predicted later adult crime. This paper is important for this research paper because it confirms the importance of having a theoretical framework of crime for juveniles that can be used to help aide in policy and programming creation.

Review of the roots of youth violence: Literature reviews (Greene, 2016).

Social learning theory is an important part of our understanding of both criminal and non-criminal behavior. The theory is also believed to be one of the most tested contemporary theories of crime and deviance and has continued to be used and tested today. This article will explain social learning theory while also explaining some limitations that exist. It also discusses the policy implications of adopting a social learning perspective. Overall, this is a great resource to use when looking at criminological theories that have a large impact of juvenile delinquency.

2. School to Prison Pipeline

In the United States, there is a pattern seen in minors, primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, becoming incarcerated, because of harsh school policies. This phenomenon is called the school-to-prison pipeline. These harsh school policies and practices and an increase in law enforcement presence in schools have created this so-called pipeline. Schools deal with student misbehavior through the use of suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests even for minor incidents, which sends a lot of youth out of school and into the criminal justice system. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund described this pipeline as "funneling of students out of school and into the streets and the juvenile correction system perpetuates a cycle known as the 'School-to-Prison-Pipeline,' depriving children and youth of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our democracy" (Tyner, 2014). This paper will explain the history and importance of the school to prison pipeline, examine how the school to prison pipeline is currently being addressed through research, policy, and programs, and then recommend way in which current approaches can be improved. Some data analysis will exist in this paper looking at specific data on suspensions in the city of Rochester.

The origins of the school to prison pipeline (Advancement Project, 2016).

This short article talks of the history of the school to prison pipeline. It explains how out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests are increasingly used to deal with student misbehavior. They claim it is a justice crisis because the students pushed out through harsh discipline are disproportionately students of color or those with disabilities. It explains how the ideology of "zero tolerance" school discipline began in the Reagan era when there was a move in the criminal justice and law enforcement world toward taking a "tough on crime stance." In the 1990's the misguided "Super Predator" theory branded young people of color as criminal, which also contributed to these harsh punishments used in schools. Schools and school districts used these tough on crime strategies in their own school discipline codes. It is important to understand the history of this phenomenon when researching it further.

Breaking the school-to-prison pipeline the crisis affecting Rochester's students and what we can do to fix it (Metro Justice, 2014).

This paper focuses solely on Rochester and was written by a Rochester research group. It found that in Rochester, over 10% of students were suspended and students missed over 54,000 days of school during the 2012-2013 school year because of suspensions. They also found that the majority of suspensions in Rochester were not for weapons, serious fights, or drugs: 88% of the 6,373 RCSD suspensions in 2012-2013 were for being disruptive and for incidents involving no physical contact. I plan on using a lot of the data found in this report to do some basic data analysis on suspension trends in the city of Rochester. Finally, they make recommendations that I will use to support for the recommendations I make in my paper.

3. School Resource Officers

The number of school resource officers (SROs) placed at schools has increased significantly in the last two decades. The increase began after several school shootings which sparked the need for making schools safer places. The school officers are meant to protect the school and make it feel like a safer place, however, some research has found that they negatively impact student's feelings of safety and may be causing more harm than good. Another aspect of law enforcement in schools is the phenomena of the school to prison pipeline. Schools are using resource officers to discipline students for minor infractions. This is breaking the trust and safety that the officers are meant to bring. Some research questions I hope to investigate include: What duties do resource officers believe they are intended for? How does administration utilize resource officers? What is the officer's overall feelings towards the position and day to day job?

This is where my primary data collection and analysis for the capstone will be. I plan to meet and interview between 5 school resource officers, primarily in the city of Rochester, but also in suburban schools. I will create a list of questions and conduct semi-structured interviews. I then plan to analyze this data and compare it to national school's resource officer survey results to see if officers respond similarly.

School policing: Results of a national survey of school resource officers (Kurtz, Lloyd, Harwin, & Osher, 2018).

This is a report of a national survey of school resource officers. It was conducted 2018 by the Education Week Research Center through an online survey to 400 school resource officers. I am utilizing this source as a base for developing the questions I will ask in my

interviews of school resource officers. I am trying to follow the main themes of this surveys questions but allowing them to be open ended so the officers in my interviews can talk freely. This survey discussed training, daily activity, and the officers feelings towards the job. All these themes will be looking at in my own research and I would like to compare my results to the results of this survey.

4. Teen Courts and the Community

For this paper, the main research questions addressed are "How are teen courts used in various communities across the United States? Which courts have been most successful? What are some of the biggest challenges they face?" For this paper I will discuss various teen court programs that exist and explain the types of communities that they function in. I also want to address how these types of courts impact the communities they are a part of. Teen courts are a specialized juvenile diversion program designed to prevent the formal processing of first-time juvenile offenders within the juvenile justice system. These courts are different from a regular juvenile court in that they involve youth ages 14-16 that are typically first-time offenders of mostly non-violent crimes and status offenses. Most of the sanctions they receive involve community service rather than being sentenced to a juvenile detention facility. Since the 1990s the use of these teen courts has been increasing dramatically across the United States. This is a non-traditional approach to our criminal justice system that has a very community-based focus and philosophy. By evaluating the literature, I hope to identify the types of communities where courts have the most positive outcomes as well as see what methods are most commonly used in these courts. Some data analysis will be done on the courts in New York State and a observation of teen court in Rochester, NY.

The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002).

This source is a report on the Urban Institutes Evaluation of Teen Courts project. The evaluation was done on teen courts in four locations—Alaska, Arizona, Maryland, and Missouri. This source will be extremely helpful in this paper because it introduces the concept of teen courts, explaining their history in the United States as well as laws and processes that the courts use. The report introduces various theoretical frameworks that are related to the effectiveness of the teen court programs. It then goes to evaluate the four programs and presents the findings of their data collection. After, it answers some of its primary research questions. The overall goal of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the courts to reduce recidivism among low level adolescent offenders. This review helps to show how various courts are currently being run and how they are affecting the communities they are in. This research also collected demographic information of the youth in the courts as well as their families. This will help to see community demographics and understand how the court fits within the community type.

Teen Courts: A Focus on Research (Butts & Buck, 2000).

This is an older article from 2000 by two researchers that have done a lot of research on teen courts. The paper discusses how at the time this was written, the number of Teen Court programs in the US had been growing rapidly since they began in the 1960's. At this time, they estimated 675 Teen Courts. That number is a lot higher now and I can use it in comparison for my paper. The article is focusing research on teen courts structures of views. The article provides information about the characteristics of established teen courts and the operational and managerial challenges they face. The research they conducted included a national survey of

Teen Courts. It found that these types of courts had high community support for them. This paper will be very helpful to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these Teen courts first expanded and can help me to compare them to where they are now almost 20 years after this research was conducted.

Juvenile Justice and Criminological Theories

Working Paper 1

Introduction

Juvenile crime rates have been decreasing rapidly in the last three decades. The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) found that juvenile arrests for violent crime is at an all-time low. And yet, 2,805 children are arrested each day in the United States (The State of America's Children®, 2017). A child should get to grow up feeling safe and secure, with room to grow and develop with the support of their families, schools, and communities. Even with the decline in juvenile crime rates, there are over 1 million children arrested each year. These are primarily children of color and those that come from lower income communities. These children are also more likely to be struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues, as well come from broken homes where they may have faced neglect or abuse. A lot of these children are kicked out of their homes or their schools—in what is known as the school to prison pipeline—and are ending up in the juvenile justice system, or worse, the adult criminal justice system (The State of America's Children®, 2017). This paper will be discussing the topic of juvenile delinquency. Juvenile justice is an important topic because it is a problem we have been constantly dealing with. Adolescent crime behavior left untreated can result in more serious crime and antisocial activity. This research is important because by understanding and using criminological theory we can find possible treatments and understand the causes of juvenile delinquency.

After a thorough literature review of the current research on criminological theories and juvenile delinquency, the paper will continue with a detailed review of the three theories chosen. This first theory I will discuss is The Social Bond Theory by Travis Hirschi. As a control theory, it generally assumes that criminal and delinquent acts occur when a person's bond to society is

broken or weak. This theory is important in juvenile delinquency because it explains how social

bonds and delinquency are inversely related, meaning that less social bonds means more

delinquency. The four elements of social bond theory, attachment, commitment, involvement,

and belief, have been found to play a large role in a child turning to delinquency. The next

theory I will discuss is Social Learning Theory. This theory is an extension of Sutherland's

differential association theory that argues that criminal behavior is learned in interaction with

others and that crime can be learned through imitation and differential reinforcement. Finally, I

will talk about Shaw and McKay's theories revolving around juvenile delinquency and its roots

in community life and the daily experiences that shape patterns of behavior for the youth in the

area. I will then integrate the three theories and explain how they apply to the topic of juvenile

delinquency. The paper will finish by providing policy recommendations and explaining the

limitations of the integrated theory.

Literature Review

There is a mass amount of research and theoretical perspectives on the study of deviant

behavior in general, as well as specifically in juvenile delinquency. This research exists as to

test these theories and either support or critique them, as well as to compare and integrate the

theories. Juvenile delinquency is an extremely important topic and criminological theorist are

especially interested in what, why, and how the delinquent behavior occurs. The following

research focuses on explanations and research on juvenile delinquency, specifically regarding the

Social Learning Theory, Social Bond Theory, and Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas.

Entner et. al. conducted research that was interested in the interactions and experiences in daily life of a juvenile. They used different models to try to explain how these experiences effect criminal behavior. The first model is on social-causation. This attempts to link crime to existing relationships. The next is a model on social-selection that attempts to link crime to the characteristics of the individual child. Finally, they look at a mixed selection-causation model that combines the first two models of both relationships and personal characteristics. The study that the article was written about, tested these three models in New Zealand in a longitudinal study with participants from 0-21. This article specifically examined low self-control as well as social bonds and criminal behavior. This shows the interaction between self-control theories and the social bond theory. The study finds that low self-control in childhood can predict lack of social bonds and criminal offending later in their life. The study also finds that low self-control on crime is largely affected by social bonds of the individual, further supporting my inclusion of social bond theory in the integrated theory on juvenile delinquency (Entner Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999).

Kristan, Crosnoe, and Dornbusch were interested in the examination of social factors that can be linked to changes in youth deviance. Their research specifically focuses on substance use and delinquency. This longitudinal study evaluates a model that combines ideas from two explanations of crime. The study looks at social bonds to see how they change adolescent deviance over time. They found that strong social bonds with family and friends can inherently reduce criminal behavior by decreasing associations with deviant peers and their negative behaviors. These associations and bonds are explained significantly in Social Bond Theory and

is understood to affect a person's deviant behaviors. This study combines social control theory and differential association theory (Kristan, Crosnoe, & Dornbusch, 2000).

There has been ample research conducted on Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory. This research, by Krohn and Massey, examines three ideas: the four elements of Hirschi's social bond (attachment, belief, commitment and involvement) and their overall impact and relative effectiveness on criminal behavior; examine the difference in the range in seriousness of offenses occurred, looking at both major and minor and determining if there is a difference in the four elements effects; and finally determine if this theory is more accurate in explaining criminal behavior of females than it is for males. This study looked at all four components in a sample of 3,056 youth. They found that the observed results somewhat support the theory in all cases. When predicting crime through social bonds, they are more predictive for less serious crime than they are for serious crime. When looking at each elements relation to the criminal behavior, they found that commitment is more related than belief or attachment. Finally, when comparing the theories relation to gender, they found that there was more variation in the dependent variable for females than males. Findings suggest that there is need for the theory to be modified. Examination of predictive power of the elements of social bond suggest it may be important to expand the number of sources to which people can be bonded. Academic commitment and extracurricular activities commitment has different effects on criminal behavior. This may be important to keep in mind when making policy recommendations (Krohn, & Massey, 1980).

This research discusses how they integrated the control theory and labeling theory. The study looks at four hypotheses over many years. First, it looks to see if variables of control

theory are linked to decreases in drug use. Then, it considers variables of labeling theory to see

if it is linked to increases or decreases in drug use, or if it is negatively related to variables of

control theory. The third hypothesis is that involvement in a juvenile diversion program is

linked to increases in drug use, criminal labeling, and broken social bonds. Finally, the authors

hypothesize that diversion programs differ in outcome across genders. They found some support

in each of their hypotheses. They also talk specifically about labeling theory and the idea of

juvenile courts and how they were created to help limit the effects of Labeling Theory on youth

who commit minor offenses (Downs, Robertson, & Harrison, 1997).

This article is on a study that not only discusses Social Learning Theory, but also

integrates the attachment element of the Social Bond Theory. O'Connor et. al. looks at

parenting programs for the parents of elementary aged children that teach and discuss techniques

and behavioral principles that apply to social learning theory. They examined the impact of

social learning theory–based programs on the changes in parent–child relationships. A

randomized clinical trial occurred of 6-year olds from an urban area. The children were assigned

to a parenting program and either a reading intervention or no intervention. They were then

observed by researchers with their parents in their homes during free play, challenge play, and

clean up. Researchers observed and measured parenting and rated them as positive or negative,

then looked at attachment theory measures, and children's attachment narratives. They explain

how Social learning theory says that children's experiences and exposures throughout their daily

life can both directly or indirectly shape their behavior. Due to this, each child's learning is

different, and they have different ways of interacting and engaging with others. The important

take away of this research is their finding of the primary source of social learning being from the parent-child relationship (O'Connor, Matias, Futh, Tantam, & Scott, 2013).

The integration of these theories is not a new concept. In 1976, Conger integrates both Social Bond Theory and Social Learning Theory. This article reviews and compares models of both social control and social learning. Through their analysis, they determined that social learning model can create predictions with further influence the control theory perspective. They believe that the experiences and observations of youth has an influence on delinquent behavior, and that attachments also have a large influence on delinquent behavior. The study concludes that specific pieces of Social Bond Theory, Social Learning theory, and Control Theory all work to create a more comprehensive understanding on juvenile delinquency. He also believed that social bond theory was incomplete and therefore needed to be integrated with other theories in order to answer more questions regarding deviant behavior (Conger, 1976).

According to Sampson and Groves, Shaw and McKay's theory of social disorganization has never been directly tested. For their study, they build onto this theory at a community-level and formulate a model which is then tested. They hypothesize that different variables such as economic status, family disruption, and residential characteristics can lead to social disorganization. This social disorganization can then cause an increase in crime rates. They measure a community's level of social organization through measures such as the existence of networks, control, and organizational participation. This study is tested within Great Britain. Results support the theory, showing social disorganization effects rates of both criminal victimization and criminal offending. They claim that three structural factors, economic status,

ethnic diversity, and residential flexibility, can lead to the breakdown of the community's social organization. This social disorganization is what leads to variations in crime and delinquency (Sampson, & Groves, 1989).

Explanation of Theories

Social Learning Theory

Akers' Social Learning Theory is an extension of Sutherland's Differential Association Theory which argues that through interaction with the people around you, criminal behavior can be learned. What Sutherland's theory is lacking however, is the way in which these behaviors are learned. Akers and Burgess attempt to give a solution to this limitation by providing several theories of learning related to behavioral theory and social learning theory to describe how crime is learned as in psychology. Akers' theory is still compatible with Sutherland's theory since they both argue that people learn how to engage in crime through interaction, but Akers goes further in depth to fully describe how the behaviors are adopted (Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

To expand Differential Association Theory, he argues that crime can be learned through imitation and differential reinforcement. Social learning theory explains criminal and delinquent behavior more than differential association theory. They identified different learning mechanisms through Modern Behavioral Theory. This theory explains how certain variables can motivate and control certain types of crime and deviance. Because of this, a primary assumption that must be made is that the same learning process, through interaction, occurs when learning both deviant and conforming behaviors (Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

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Akers' development of the theory focused on 4 major concepts: differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation. First, the differential association, refers to the idea that a person is exposed to normative definitions favorable or unfavorable to illegal or law-abiding behaviors. It has both behavioral interactional and normative dimensions. Within the interactional dimension there is a direct association where the person interacts with certain people and then there is an indirect association where a person has some sort of association with a distant group. The normative dimension is when the individuals are exposed to groups who have different patterns of norms and values. Next is the definitions. These are the individuals own attitudes or beliefs that they feel towards different behaviors. Their general belief, such as religion or values, or their specific belief, such as their morals, affect their opinions on certain behaviors. The more disapproval they feel towards specific acts, the less likely they are to engage in them. Third, differential reinforcement, has to do with the understanding of rewards and punishments that may follow a specific behavior. People weigh their past, present and future outcomes before acting, and it is possible that people resort to crime because they see rewarding outcomes, such a money or food, instead of a punishing outcome, such as jail time. Finally, imitation is the act of observing a behavior in others, and using it as a model for yourself, and recreating a similar behavior (Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

Akers theory has received a lot of support and has become one of the leading theories in criminal justice to explain why people engage in criminal behavior. This support has not only come from other researchers recreating and confirming the results, but also from Akers and his team. Even with so much support, the theory still has limitations. First, it focuses primarily on

how the environment affects learning, but doesn't consider the child's own actions. This places

more emphasize on the community around them rather than the child's emotional way of

handling the new information. It also doesn't consider a child's natural maturity. As they get

older they learn right from wrong, and therefore the environment may play more of a role in

younger youth than as they get into their teenage years. This theory fails to consider age and

maturity. A younger child may be affected more by seeing something and wanting to imitate it,

then would an older child. Regardless of these limitation, the perspective of this theory comes

with many policy implications. Policy-makers should consider social learning variables and

implement preventive and rehabilitative programs that can help to change behavior. Some of

these programs can include mentoring, peer counseling, and gang interventions. These programs

will give youth positive experiences and role models. The idea is that it will expose them to

conventional norms and values that will help to keep them from delinquent behavior in the future

(Greene, 2016).

Social Bond Theory

The Social Bond Theory by Travis Hirschi is considered a control theory. Control

theories in general assume that criminal and delinquent acts occur when a person's bond to

society is broken or weak. Social Bond Theory can be put into two propositions. The first

explains how social bonds and delinquency are inversely related. This means that less social

bonds are related to more delinquency. The second proposition explains the concept of social

bond theory in four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Attachment has to do with a child's social relationships. These relationships include parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and other adults in their lives. Because these relationships are formed, the child will more likely care about keeping the relationship and care about what the other person thinks of them. Hirschi believes the most crucial bond is the relationship with parents. When children are older, parents cannot directly control their children because they are not always with them. Instead they must have the formed relationship where they have indirect control, and when they are not physically present, they are psychologically present, and the child is diverted from committing a crime. Commitment explains a person's push to reach goals. When kids are doing well in school or activities and have potential, they are less likely to engage in acts that could jeopardize their success. Next, he explains involvement, meaning that just being involved in activities helps facilitate control and prevention. Kids that are involved have their time consumed by their activities and have little time to get into trouble. Finally, Hirschi talks about belief. If a child was socialized into his community and the communities' social norms, then it should be assumed that the kid understands the rules of the society. Perhaps a child was socialized imperfectly or believes in the rules and is breaking them anyway because they a treating them as mere words and there is not control (Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

Hirschi's theory has been tested numerous times, and the results have been varied due to different factors, but overall there has been consistent support for his thesis that lack of social bonds increases the risk of being involved in criminal behavior. A limitation however, is that this theory does not consider macro social changes, such as Shaw and McKay's theory which is discussed next. Creating policy based on Social Bond Theory is difficult because certain parts of

the theory are difficult to change. For example, you cannot force someone to change their

beliefs. Some policy-makers attempt to focus on commitment and involvement by creating

youth groups and activities, but these are also hard to implement because people need to utilize

and engage in the programs. Many researchers agree that the most effective policy implications

focus on parenting or the element of attachment. Researcher have claimed that the element of

attachment, specifically the influence of parents, has a strong influence on a juvenile's level of

conformity to community norms. This is done through parent's manner of raising their child

through supervision and communication. If they do this adequately, the child is more likely to

form strong attachment and therefore lead to less criminal behavior. It has been found that

parent training programs have has some success in reducing the delinquent behavior (Vito,

Maahs & Holmes, 2005).

Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas

Shaw and McKay's theories revolve around the fact that juvenile delinquency has its

roots in community life and the daily experiences that shape patterns of behavior for the youth in

the area. It is not simply personality or biological traits that effect whether a youth resorts to

crime, but they are also influenced by the community around them. Rates of delinquency vary

from community to community, but those communities with higher rates of delinquency tend to

share some similar traits and conditions within them. It has been observed that the variations in

rates of delinquency in a community correspond very closely with variations in economic status.

Communities that have higher rates of delinquency are the communities who are more

disadvantaged regarding economic, social, and cultural values. These communities also have

lower levels of uniformity, consistency, and conventional values and attitudes, which increases

the probability of turning to delinquency. In these communities, parents try to teach their kids

morals, but they are competing with criminal influences, such as gangs, whose culture is already

deeply rooted in the communities (Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

One of the biggest critiques and limitations of Shaw and McKay's theory is the way they

describe the communities outside of the inner city. They oversimplify the rate of delinquent

among more affluent communities by explaining how they have high levels of uniformity and

agreed upon conventional values and attitudes. They also have more conventional norms

through institutions and organizations such as community groups, churches, and parent-teacher

associations. These groups keep expose children to positive activities. The problem with this is

that although lower income communities do have higher rates of serious crimes, juvenile

delinquency and other criminal behavior still exists in upper-class communities.

This theory of crime can have policy implications. Shaw and McKay's main perspective

is that community disorganization, primarily in lower income inner city communities, is a source

of delinquency. An obvious solution to this perspective then in the organize these communities.

The researchers put this theory to test by starting the Chicago Area Project. This Project was

designed to help organize the communities, specifically to keep youth from crime. It created

recreational programs throughout the community, cleaned up the appearance of the community

such as picking up trash and cleaning up empty or abandoned lot, worked with schools and the

local criminal justice system to work to intervene in problem youths lives, and have community

residents counsel the youth which gives them another level of authority after their parents to

keep an eye on them in the community to help them avoid crime. The effectiveness of the

Chicago Area Project is not known, but some evidence exists that the program did help to reduce

delinquency in some forms. The main takeaway from the Chicago Area Project is that

interventions that ignore community dynamics will be very limited in their ability to prevent the

onset of criminal conduct. Community dynamics must be considered in intervention style

programs if there is to be any chance of improving the community and decreasing delinquency

(Cullen, & Agnew, 2006).

Integration of Theories

Theory integration involves combining the concepts and propositions from two or more

theories into a new theory that has integrated those concepts and propositions. There have been

two types of integration found to occur: conceptual and propositional. Conceptual integration

looks at the theories and argue that their concepts have the same meaning and it then combines

them into a single theory. Propositional integration links the propositions from the multiple

theories into a single set of propositions. Conceptual integration is much more common than

propositional integration (Elliott, 2012). This section of the paper integrates the three theories

explained above: Social Learning Theory, Social Bond Theory, and Juvenile Delinquency and

Urban Areas.

Integration of these theories can begin by finding the similarities of three theories. First,

Social Learning Theory focuses on the surrounding environment of people and their direct and

indirect interaction with a juvenile. Focus on the surrounding community environment and the

people within it is very important. Their direct and indirect interaction with a juvenile can have huge impact on delinquency. Community disorganization greatly affects those in lower income communities, which is directly associated with those who are being arrested. Community disorganization plays a role social learning as well. These communities are highly disorganized and contain gangs and other criminals who are acting as models to the youth in their communities. These also include their parents. A lot of times, parents are also involved in crime or drugs, and if they are not, they are working to make a living and aren't present as often in their child's life. This connects to the Social Bond Theory connection of the attachment element. They have the greatest influence of control as well as teach the social norms and beliefs. Finally, as policy is put into place to attempt to organize communities and create more positive influences and mentors, different programs will be put in place to help attempt to increase a child's involvement and commitment. With these positive influences, it will help to reduce youth from resorting to crime.

This integration of these theories applies specifically to juvenile delinquency. All three of the theories on their own discuss explanations for why youth resort to criminal behavior. Choosing the topic of juvenile delinquency is an ever-important topic, as these youths are the future and if we don't intervene now, it can cause serious consequences. Although juvenile arrest has been decreasing over the last three decades, there is still over 1 million youth arrests per year. Putting these individuals in the juvenile detention centers, or worse, into the adult criminal justice system, can have detrimental effects to the child's growth and development.

Using this integrated theory to push policy is necessary to maintain the decrease in youth arrest, and work to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline.

Limitations of the Integrated Theory

Each theory on its own presents its own critiques and limitations. This integrated theory can still not account for juvenile delinquent behavior that occurs outside of the inner city. We know that juvenile arrests are primarily seen in lower income neighborhoods with minority populations, and therefore most of these theories focus on these types of communities. However, even with the integration of the theories, they fail to answer why youth crime still occurs in suburban and wealthy neighborhoods, where there is organized communities, and stronger social bonds. One explanation to this in the integrated theory could be how media plays a role in social learning theory, and although more serious crimes are not occurring as often in affluent neighborhoods, children are being exposed to it through media and video games. But this still doesn't explain the crime, since social bonds would still be expected to be broken, for the child to have the opportunity to commit crime. Along with the consideration of media comes another limitation that is seen primarily in Hirschi's Social Bond Theory. Researchers claim that Social Bond Theory does not consider macro social changes. This integrated theory attempts to mitigate this by using Social Learning Theory which does account for macro changes in society, such as the greater use of media, including social media. There are still some limitations of Social Learning Theory that are not accounted for. First, with integrating Social Learning Theory with community social disorganization, it directs a lot of blame to the environment and

not to the individual person. We attempt to mitigate this by using Social Bond Theory which is a control theory and the individual own control plays a role. How a child processes and handles variables in their life can play a role in their actions, not just their environment. It also doesn't account for regular child development and maturity. Not all people mature at the same rate in childhood, but certain milestones happen to each person, and some have a stronger affect on some than others. This integrated model does not and cannot take into account all of the different limitations of each theory. Some limitations can be answered through the addition or explanation of another theory, but not all of them. This must be considered when uses an integrated model such as this to help guide policy.

Policy Recommendations

This integrated theory can help improve the policy implications of the individual theories on their own. For example, when discussing Shaw and McKay's theory, the obvious solution to these low income disorganized communities is to organize them. For example, in the Chicago Area Project, recreational programs were created, as well as creating services where community residents could counsel the youth. These types of programs can also pay close attention to the policy recommendations of the other theories. When creating these community programs, they should be considering social learning variables, as seen in policy motivated by social learning theory. These variables will motivate the implementation of preventive and rehabilitative programs that can help to change the behavior of the juveniles. Similar to

counseling within the community, the programs can include mentoring, peer counseling, and gang interventions (Greene, 2016).

The important part is that these programs are located within the community that the youth being targeted is from. Helping to organize their communities, while also providing them with positive learning environments, it is increasing their chances of being diverted from crime. This is clear when looking at the outcomes of the Chicago Area Project. The main takeaway was that interventions that ignore community dynamics will be very limited in their ability to prevent the onset of criminal conduct. Community dynamics must be considered in intervention style programs if there is to be any chance of improving the community and decreasing delinquency.

Creating policy that can also consider Social Bond theory is a bit more difficult because the elements of social bond are a lot more personal and individualistic. The elements of attachment and belief are very much dependent on individuals. You cannot force someone to change their beliefs through policy. When you're considering the integration of these three theories, when determining community organizations and programs, the best way to help affect the element of attachment would be to offer parenting training. These types of programs can have some influence in reducing delinquent behavior by improving parenting skills and increasing child-parent bonds. This however will only work if the people in the community are willing to learn. Research has found that people want to be good parents they just never learned how, and therefore cannot raise their children in a manner that builds strong social bonds.

Some policy-makers attempt to focus on commitment and involvement through youth group activities. These programs would be similar to community organization programs and

include similar ideas. The issue with these programs is that people need to be motivated to use them. One way to motivate youth to utilize these programs and resources is by placing a focus towards programs within the school system. Additionally, school intervention is important due to the part of the attachment element of social bond theory which includes peer attachments.

Conclusion

After a thorough literature review of the current research on criminological theories and juvenile delinquency, it is clear that there is a mass amount of research and theoretical perspectives on the study of deviant behavior in general, as well as specifically in juvenile delinquency. This research exists as to test these theories and either support or critique them, as well as to compare and integrate the theories. Juvenile delinquency is an extremely important topic and criminological theorist are especially interested in how policy can help reduce juvenile crime. The integration of the three theories, and how they apply to the topic of juvenile delinquency, will allow policy recommendations to be implemented. There still exists limitations within the integrated theory, however, using the three theories together, helps to provide a better understanding of all of the variables that influence juvenile delinquency.

Although juvenile crime rates have been decreasing rapidly in the last three decades, 2,805 children are still arrested each day in the United States (The State of America's Children®, 2017). A child should get to grow up feeling safe and secure, with room to grow and develop with the support of their families, schools, and communities. Of those being arrested, they are mostly children of color and those that come from lower income communities. After these

youths are incarcerated, they are at risk of physical and psychological abuse, sexual assault, and suicide. They also lack proper educational instruction while in these facilities, which effects their overall growth. These risks are more extreme when the child is sent to the adult criminal justice system, as they do not provide adequate resources for rehabilitation and traditional adolescent development (The State of America's Children®, 2017). Juvenile justice is an important topic because it is a problem we have been constantly dealing with. Adolescent crime behavior left untreated can result in more serious crime and antisocial activity. This research is important because by understanding and using criminological theory we can find possible treatments and understand the causes of juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile Justice and the School to Prison Pipeline

Working Paper 2

Introduction

In the United States, harsh school policies have disproportionately resulted in the incarceration of economically disadvantaged minors. In the 1980s, schools adopted a zero-tolerance ideology in their policies and practices, as well as increase the presence of law enforcement. Schools consequently dealt with student misbehavior through greater use of suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests—often even for minor incidents, which sends many youth out of school and into the criminal justice system. These changes thus precipitated the "school-to-prison pipeline". Research attention detailing the adverse effects of the school to prison pipeline on minorities has grown in recent years (CITES?), however, schools have been generally unresponsive. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund described this pipeline as "funneling of students out of school and into the streets and the juvenile correction system perpetuates a cycle known as the 'School-to-Prison-Pipeline,' depriving children and youth of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our democracy" (Tyner, 2014).

This working paper provides an overview of the history and importance of the school to prison pipeline, as well as relates how this phenomenon has impacted the city of Rochester. I then turn to outlining the costs and benefits of attempts to mitigate the pipeline in both the law and criminal justice practice, both nationally and in Rochester. The final section will develop recommendations improving the current responses and make suggestions for new responses to help stop the effects of the school-to-prison pipeline.

History

The zero-tolerance philosophy began in the 1980s under the Reagan administration's toughening of drugs and crime policies. As a result of this toughening, especially seen with minor offenses, national prison populations increased markedly. The notion that young (often minority) offenders were "Super Predators," was often cited as the theoretical justification for this stance (Larson & Carvente, 2017). Schools mimicked the criminal justice system with a similarly tough stance on what had previously been treated as minor delinquency. Students could now be suspended or expelled for minor non-violent offenses, irrespective of their individual circumstances or the context of the action. In addition to harsher discipline policies, the number of law enforcement, primarily in the form of school resource officers has also increased 38% from 1997 to 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Justice (Advancement Project, 2016). Tyner (2014) agreed that the primary contributing factors to the growth of the pipeline was the school disciplinary practices that have been adopted, as well as zero tolerance policies (Tyner, 2014).

Consequences of Zero Tolerance

This toughening of sanctions in school has had unintended consequences. Simply placing more police in schools puts students at an increased risk of being arrested, especially for minor cases, instead of a school discipline sanction being used. Even with using school discipline sanctions, we have learned through previous research that the overuse of more serious sanctions, such as suspension, expulsion, and other harsh disciplinary policies, increases the chance of a youth entering the criminal justice system. Suspension has been found to contribute to "lower academic performance among students, lower school-wide academic performance, and

an increased likelihood of school dropout" (Advancement Project, 2016). In his study, Tyner estimated that 3.3 million children are being suspended each year in the United States, with 95% being for non-violent offenses (Tyner, 2014). If these students are missing so much class time for suspensions, they are being kept from their education, and it is not surprising that many dropout or have failing grades. School districts such as the Rochester City School District suffer from low graduation rates and high rates of drop out. This research is important to help determine ways to stop the school-to-prison pipeline in order to give every child the opportunity to succeed in school and beyond. (Advancement Project, 2016).

In addition to students are being suspended and expelled for minor non-violent offenses, without their individual circumstances being considered, some are even being arrested after their schools got the police involved. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 42% of schools had resource officer in 2015 (Sherfinski, 2018). The US. Department of Justice also saw these high numbers as they reported a 38% increase in the number of resource officers from 1997 to 2007 (Advancement Project, 2016). Nationwide, more and more schools are implementing resource officers in order to increase school safety. However, the presence of police in schools often has negative effect of punishment rather than a feeling of safety. "When schools have law enforcement on site, students are more likely to be arrested by police instead of discipline being handled by school officials. This leads to more kids being funneled into the juvenile justice system, which is both expensive and associated with a host of negative impacts on youth" (Kaba, 2017).

School-to-Prison Pipeline in Rochester

The Rochester City School District is one of the poorest in the nation. There are 26,000 k-12 students within the district. Of those, 90% (23,500) are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The racial breakdown of the students is 58% Black/African American, 28% Hispanic/Latino, 10% White, and 4% Asian and other Pacific Islander. In June 2018, the graduation rate for RCSD was 54%, still far behind the national average which is closer to 80% (NYSED, 2019).

Many students in Rochester public schools are subjected to harsh discipline for minor infractions, including those involving no physical contact. In the 2012-13 school year, there were 6,373 total suspensions, averaging approximately 8.5 days per suspension. Of these suspensions, 88% of them were for being disruptive and for incidents involving no physical contact. Almost three-quarters of all suspensions were given to less than 5 percent of the student body who were suspended (approximately 1,600 students), who averaged 3.4 suspensions each (Murphy, 2014; Metro Justice, 2014). In 2017, there were 2,213 individual students suspended for at least one full day, this is approximately 10% of students. In comparison, New York State as a whole had 82,839 individual students suspended, which is only 3% of the total students in the state (NYSED, 2019). In addition to suspensions and expulsions, there has been an increase in school-based arrests by resource officers assigned to the school, therefore entering the student into the juvenile justice system. More students are being sent into the criminal justice system, and therefore not getting the education they need. It is important to understand that although these students deserve an education, so do the better-behaved students. The schools need to provide an environment conducive for learning for all students and need to reduce disruptive behavior so that learning can occur.

This system is also disproportionately disciplining students of color and students with disabilities. According to Metro Justice: "Black students are 2.29 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers; Latino students are 1.45 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers; Students with disabilities are 1.3 times more likely to be suspended than their non-disabled peers; Black students with disabilities are 2.6 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers" for the same misconduct (Metro Justice, 2014). These statistics show that this is also a civil rights issue due to the long-term impact it has on these minority communities.

After the 2012-13 school year data was released by the request of Metro Justice, and their report sparked public outcry, the Superintendent promised he would work to fix the problem. There were some changes made such as a new code of conduct and comprehensive anti-racism training, however data from the 2015-16 school year do not show much progress. The overall suspensions across the district decreased by about 3 percent, but where gains were made in some categories, others got worse (Murphy, 2016). Although some improvements have been made, there is still a clear problem, and many people, like Metro Justice, believe that the school to prison pipeline plays a big role in this.

Responses to the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Responses to Addressing the School to Prison Pipeline

In Syracuse, there was a large investigation on the city school district's disciplinary policies and practices. The Attorney General Eric Schneideran in 2014 announced his office was committed to reducing the high use of disciplinary actions in the school district. They made an

agreement to further the commitment to protect school safety, while ensuring that every student in Syracuse has access to a quality educational environment. Under the terms of the agreement the school district is going to make many efforts to help reduce the problem. Some of these efforts included an external audit of compliance with agreement, plans and implementation of preventative techniques to avoid bad behavior, an amended code of conduct, additional staff training, and addition of a designated Ombudsman for the district, upgraded data keeping, and new methods for informing stakeholders and remaining transparency in changes made (NY Attorney General's Press Office, 2014). In Minnesota, the Minneapolis school district noticed high suspension rates and disparities in suspensions of students of color and decided of action to monitor this data and make changes to reduce the problem. The district emphasized alternatives to out of school suspensions for non-violent violations, and banned suspensions for non-violent behaviors for the younger students. In addition, they implemented more training for teachers to better handle behavior in classrooms (Post, 2014). In two years, the district was able to reduce the suspensions by more than half. They were not however able to reduce the racial disparity. Their superintendent believed that the drop was a result of the districts use of alternatives to out of school suspensions for non-violent violations. They banned suspensions for non-violent behaviors for the younger students. In addition, they implemented more training for teachers to better handle behavior in classrooms (Post, 2014). These are just some of the ways that school districts nationwide are responding to the school to prison pipeline, although a lot of research believe that more can be done to help our nation's children have successful educations and futures.

Responses in Rochester

In the Rochester The Rochester City School District has attempted to respond to the school to prison pipeline by partnering with the Center for Youth to create and Alternatives to Suspension (ATS) program, where students could be disciplined without missing class time and falling behind. The program allows students who would otherwise be suspended to be in a classroom with a teacher to assist with their work and someone else to help with their behavioral problems. When it was first integrated over 10 years ago, it was placed in 12 elementary schools. They saw very good results from this program with suspensions decreasing from 100 to 10 in one school during the programs first year. However, when it was brought up to have widespread use of it, the district instead had budgets cuts and funding was only restored in some schools (Murphy, 2014).

The school district also has partnered with Rochester Area Community Foundation to write a new code of conduct, utilizing input from students from the Center for Teen Empowerment (Murphy, 2014). In addition to changes in the code of conduct, they also implemented comprehensive anti-racism training to teachers, and increased their budget for social-emotional supports (Murphy, 2016). In the new code of conduct, the foreword acknowledges that the revisions are responsive to the school to pipeline phenomenon:

> "This Code is intended to be a living document. We have begun with an initial goal of minimizing the push-out of students through suspensions and arrests, which are shown to contribute to what has been termed the "school-to-prison pipeline." Multiple layers contribute to students' success and well-being, including engaging families as partners and assuring that District personnel and school-level staff have the supports and resources they need to implement the new Code. The focus of all of our collaborative efforts, including this Code and beyond, is a vibrant and supportive school climate across the District" (Rochester City School Board, 2016).

Even with these attempts to make change through the new code of conduct, comprehensive anti-racism training, and restorative justice training, the 2015-16 school year do not show much progress. The overall suspensions across the district decreased by about 3 percent (Murphy, 2016).

Recommendations to Improve Responses

Counselors Instead of Resource Officers

Since prior attempts to mitigate the school to prison pipeline have not resulted in marked success, this paper presents alternatives. One contributing factor to the pipeline appears to be the increased number of police in schools. It follows from this that schools should use police as a last resort rather than a first responder to misconduct (Stoebig & Vega, 2016). School resource officers therefore should not duplicate police functions but see their function principally as counselors. Schools could also hire ombudsman for conflict mediation, as they did in Syracuse (NY Attorney General's Press Office, 2014) The Ombudsman would be an impartial conflict resolution practitioner who could help the student or staff member involved in the conflict. This could help improve conflict mediation and better support both the students and the staff. Many universities have offices such as this, and it is growing in K-12 schools across the country. A large issue that could arise with this response is the lack of funds to hire an adequate number of counselors. If schools were able to increase their budgets and hire additional counselors, students' behavior problems will be better supported through communication and counseling.

Enhance Staff Training

Another way to help improve the way discipline is handled in schools, is to enhance staff training for both faculty, support staff and administrators. Through the research seen in the last paper, many schools have already begun this. In Minnesota they implemented more training for teachers to better handle behavior in classrooms (Post, 2014). In Syracuse, they also implemented additional staff training (NY Attorney General's Press Office, 2014). In the RCSD, teachers have begun going through comprehensive anti-racism training to help decrease the levels of disparities in discipline (Murphy, 2016). The National Education Association thinks that those working in the schools should be prepared to respond to the social and emotional needs of every student, not just their intellectual needs (NEA, 2016). This is a difficult task to ask of teachers that already have a lot of responsibilities. However, an important aspect of enhancing training is that the training is ongoing and that the staff can develop skills and learn tools to help them in various situations throughout their careers. Training should include developing communication skills and strategies for various interactions, developing cultural competence, understanding the impact of interactions on students, and training modules throughout various levels of a staff members career (NEA, 2016). Through training and experience, teachers can learn to better respond to the varying needs of students.

Improved Data Collection and Monitoring

School districts are not well positioned to relieve the school to prison pipeline without information about suspensions and expulsions. In Syracuse, part of their agreement with the Attorney General was the task of upgrading their data keeping and using new methods for informing stakeholders and remaining transparent (NY Attorney General's Press Office, 2014). In Rochester, they addressed the issue by having a computer system overhaul to improve data

collection, but there has been no follow-up to see if this has been helpful (Murphy, 2014). Data

collection and monitoring again costs money. You need to hire professionals who can keep a

database updated and analyze the data to be useful to stakeholders. Ultimately, having improved

data collection and analysis helps improve trust within the community and transparency. With

this data, schools can have evidence to push for more resources in various sectors. It can also

assist with ongoing program evaluation to help determine where improvements can be made.

Alternatives to Out of School Suspensions

Many school districts across the country are beginning to use alternatives to out of school

suspensions. These programs allow kids to not be removed from school after poor behavior, but

instead be given additional support. In Missouri, the superintendent believed that the decline in

suspension that they saw was a result of the districts use of alternatives to out of school

suspensions for non-violent violations. They also banned suspensions for non-violent behaviors

for the younger students (Post, 2014). RCSD has attempted to reduce suspension rates by

partnering with the Center for Youth to create and Alternatives to Suspension (ATS) program, so

that students could be disciplined for their behavior without missing class time and falling

behind. They saw very good results from this program, but when it was brought up to have

widespread use of it, the district instead had budgets cuts and funding was only restored in some

schools (Murphy, 2014). Taking students out of class is harmful to their overall success. Many

schools are using these alternate practices to discipline the students for poor behavior but still

allow them to stay in class and stay on a successful track (Stoebig & Vega, 2016).

Increased Engagement

A final recommendation to improve the responses to the school-to-prison pipeline is to increase engagement with the students, their families, and the communities they are a part of. Engagement and partnerships with community organizations can be very helpful to school districts. RCSD working with the Center for Teen Empowerment and the Center for Youth (Murphy, 2016). These connections help schools to make positive changes in their policies and practices through meaningful conversations and collaborations on project with these types of groups. School districts should foster relationships with community-based nonprofits, peer mentoring groups, mental health organizations, churches, professional associations, alternative schools/juvenile correctional institutions, law enforcement, and national and state advocacy groups (NEA, 2016). In addition to relationships with outside partners, schools should focus on the social and emotional needs of students. The can do this by engaging with parents and other care givers through the form of meetings, activities, and development programs. Making sure students are supported outside of the school walls can help improve their behavior inside (NEA, 2016).

Conclusion

The school-to-prison pipeline is harmful to the success of thousands of children across the United States. This is especially clear in the city of Rochester. "Now more than ever we need a vision for dismantling this pipeline in order to support student engagement, learning, and academic success" (Tyner, 2014). This paper shows the history of the school to prison pipeline and the importance of this research; however, the research may prove to be challenging because the data is difficult to obtain and validate. It shows that although some things are being done to help address the school to prison pipeline, it is not as successful as hoped and more must be

done. The ideology the schools adopt for discipline must be focused on supporting the student's success and dealing with non-violent behavioral problems in ways other than suspensions. There are many improvements that can be made to keep our youth on the track towards success, and out of the streets and prison. The problem is extremely complex and requires both social, cultural, and political changes to occur. Many of these solutions require money that some school districts just don't have. To help improve this problem, we need to invest more in the education of our youth and use that money to best support the students in the schools. Overall, we have seen juvenile crime decreasing over the last decade, but it is important that we keep our schools safe and that children are able to receive an education in an environment where they can grow and develop.

Keeping Our Youth Safe in Schools: School Resource Officers

Working Paper 3

Introduction

Schools across the country are not only responsible for educating the youth to help them prepare for the rest of their lives, but they are also responsible for the student's safety while they are in their care. Throughout history there have been various shootings across the country in public places such as movie theaters, on college campuses, and at K-12 schools. In recent years, the most notable shootings include the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School that claimed the lives of 20 children and 6 adults and the 2018 Stoneman Douglas High School shooting which claimed the lives of 17 people. These shootings have heightened public interest in school security and have sparked political debate on how school security can be enhanced. Many people believe that a response to this violence should be to fund more school resource officers (SROs) or other armed security personnel (James & McCallion, 2014).

A school resource officer is a law enforcement officer who is given a community-oriented policing assignment where they work in schools full or part time. SRO programs have many goals that range from keeping students safe in their learning environments, training teachers, mentoring youth, problem solving and protecting all students. The number of school resource officers (SROs) placed at schools has increased significantly in the last two decades. It is unknown how many school resource officers there are in the United States, as estimations range from 14,000-20,000 officers. "The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 42 percent of public schools had at least one SRO present at least one day a week during the 2015-2016 academic year" (NASRO, 2019). The school officers are meant to protect the school and make it feel like a safer place, however, they are controversial because they are often used to enforce school discipline which can negatively impact student's feelings of safety and may be causing more harm than good. Many believe that they

are contributing to the school to prison pipeline by arresting youth in schools and entering them into the juvenile system. This is breaking the trust and safety that the officers are meant to bring.

School to Prison Pipeline

In the United States, there is a pattern seen in minors, primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, becoming incarcerated, because of harsh school policies. This phenomenon is called the school-to-prison pipeline. These harsh school policies and practices and an increase in law enforcement presence in schools have created this so-called pipeline. Schools deal with student misbehavior through the use of suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests even for minor incidents, which sends a lot of youth out of school and into the criminal justice system. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund described this pipeline as "funneling of students out of school and into the streets and the juvenile correction system perpetuates a cycle known as the 'School-to-Prison-Pipeline,' depriving children and youth of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our democracy" (Tyner, 2014). One contributing factor to the pipeline is the increased number of police in schools. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 42% of schools had resource officers in 2015 (Sherfinski, 2018). Nationwide, more and more schools are implementing resource officers in response to the increase of school shootings. The following will look at current research that has been done on the effectiveness of school resource officer programs.

Review of the Literature

Over the last two decades, various research has been conducted around the topic of school resource officers. They have looked at various measures of effectiveness including students' feelings of safety, school discipline, arrests, and referrals. They also looked at characteristics of SRO programs as well as evaluating the SRO role and training. This section will review some of the literature that falls in these categories.

Students Feelings of Safety

One of the main reasons for placing officers in schools is the aspect of safety. Students feeling safe in the place they learn is very important, however, the presence of police in schools often has negative effect of punishment rather than a feeling of safety. Kaba found that "when schools have law enforcement on site, students are more likely to be arrested by police instead of discipline being handled by school officials." (Kaba, 2017). In 2016, Theriot and Orme investigated the effect of interacting with schools' resource officers on students' feelings of safety at school. They surveyed 1,956 middle and high school students. It was a comprehensive survey about the student's number of interactions with SROs, their feelings of safety, experiences with school violence, and attitudes about school. The surveys were given at a combination of middle and high schools within the same school district. All of the schools had a full-time officer assigned to their location. "Regression showed that interacting with SROs was unrelated to these feelings of safety; instead, African American students and victimized students felt less safe while males, students with more school connectedness, and students with more positive attitudes about SROs felt safer" (Theriot & Orme, 2016).

Contrary to Theriot and Ormes findings, a Canadian program evaluation found different results. The study done by a local university examined the School Resource Officer program at high schools in Peel Region from 2014 to 2017. Researchers conducted 1,300 surveys of students at and conducted interviews with school resource officers, school administrators and community members. Through the research they found that "every single one of these different groups (said) students feel safer at school". Students reported being less fearful in school, and schools reported fewer incidents of crime. Researchers were not able to look at responses based on race or culture because the surveys were anonymous, however, the eight students who were interviewed in person all came from different racial backgrounds. These findings were in Ontario Canada, but the article mentions how Toronto Canada schools cancelled their SRO program after a report by the school board found many students of color felt harassed, targeted and unsafe when police were in their schools (Goffin, 2018).

Stoebig and Vega recommend that to improve responses to the school-to-prison pipeline, schools should use police as a last resort, not a first (Stoebig & Vega, 2016). Even if the resource officers exist, they shouldn't be used in a punishing manner. When the officers are used to strictly discipline, the connection and feelings of safety are lost. As shown, mixed findings have been found on students' feelings of safety. Since students cannot be interviewed or surveyed in this current research, the measure of feelings of safety could not be determined, however, understanding the characteristics and demographics of the schools the interviewed SRO comes from, knowing how much violence they deal with, and what items they carry with them each day can help make inferences about the students' feelings. This is why these questions are on the SRO interview question list in Appendix A.

School-based Arrests and Referrals

School based arrests and referrals to the criminal justice system are a huge concern people have with SROs and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline. A study by Theriot in 2009 evaluated the impact of SROs on school-based arrest rates. He hypothesized that schools with an SRO would have more total arrests. It was a quasi-experimental study which compared arrests occurring at middle schools and high schools with an SRO, 13 schools, to those occurring at schools without an SRO in the same district, 15 schools. The study compared the number of arrests in three consecutive school years to neutralize anomalies from a single year of data. SROs were placed at schools based on geography, schools in the city received the officers. Since they didn't use random assignment, ANOVA comparisons were done to identify significant differences between the two sets of schools. It found that schools with an SRO had more poverty and a larger percentage of ethnic minority students. The models showed that having an SRO did not predict more total arrests but did predict more arrests for disorderly conduct. "Without controlling for poverty level, the presence of an SRO gives a 197.7 percent increase in the rate of arrests per one hundred students, however, when economic disadvantage is added to the regression equation, having an SRO at school is no longer a significant predictor of arrests" (Theriot, 2009). Overall the study had mixed results. The troubling find is that the number of arrests for disorderly conduct charges at schools with an SRO is high. The study recommends that school resource officers and school administrators need to be mindful of the negative consequences associated with various disciplinary strategies (Theriot, 2009).

May et. al. evaluated referrals using 3 years of youth court data from a southeastern state. Their goal was to examine whether referrals by school resource officers involved greater proportions of less serious offenses than referrals from other sources. The data was collected from the Youth Information Delivery System (YIDS) that the state kept for all referrals of juveniles from 2009 to 2011. This gave them 72,447 referrals that were made for 168 different offenses ranging from status to serious offenses. Each referral could have multiple sources, but the research was looking for SRO involvement. The results found that referrals from SROs during the 3-year period were similar to referrals by law enforcement outside of school for status and serious offenses. SROs were less likely than law enforcement officers outside of school to refer juveniles for minor offenses during the 3-year period. They found that schools in general, not just the SRO, make a large number of referrals to the juvenile justice system for less serious offenses (May et. al., 2015). One limitation of this research was the effect of school characteristics on the referrals was not able to be evaluated due to the type of data.

This final study, by Zhang and Spence, examined the impact of school-based officers on measures of crime, discipline, and disorder. They compared 238 middle and high schools with and without officers in West Virginia. They received their data from the Department of Education and looked at three consecutive years of 2014, 2015, and 2016. They had two independent variables which were weather or not an officer was present, and how long the officer had been in the school. The dependent variables were number of incidents and out of school suspensions for violent crime, drug crime, and disorder. It was a quasi-experimental design because the officers were not randomly assigned to the schools. The research found that some of the factors such as size of school, poverty level, and the student ethnic composition most strongly correlated with school crime and other problems. They found that the presence of an

officer increases the number of reported incidents related to drug crime but decreases violent crime and disorder when the officer has been in the school for multiple years. The results suggest that officers in school can be beneficial by increasing the detection and deterrence of certain problems. One such limitation is that the independent variables used in this study indicate only whether an officer was present or absent at a school, and do not provide information about how the officers worked within the school (Zhang & Spence, 2018).

This research supports asking SROs about training and types of student disciplinary issues in which the school allows them to intervene in. It also supports asking them about how they work within the school on an average day. How they interact with students in the school and how they have been trained and intervene on incidents can really affect the number of arrests and referrals made in the school. These questions can be found in Appendix A and will help to understand qualitative data on how SROs may be making arrests or referrals of its students into the criminal justice system.

Type of SRO Programs

Finn & McDevitt published numerous papers on a study they conducted on School Resource Officer programs across the country. The purpose of the study was to identify what programs existed, how they were implemented, and what the programs' possible effects are. The research group conducted a nationwide survey of established and relatively new SRO programs (n = 322 survey responses) and collected implementation data by telephone and on-site visits for case studies from 19 SRO programs. The study found that when asking the respondents whether the SRO program had increased trust in police, everyone believed it did. When asked for empirical evidence, no program could provide any. Most programs instead discussed anecdotal

evidence. None of the programs had evaluations in place to determine their effectiveness in increasing trust in police, decreasing fear in schools, or any other measure of success. (Finn & McDevitt, 2005).

Another influence on the way programs are implemented and evaluated is through government oversight. Counts et. al. conducted a study that reviewed the availability and nature of existing state policies and recommendations regarding the use of SROs in public schools. The study found that although considered a best practice by many respected parties including the federal government, no states universally require collection of data to determine the need for or evaluation of SRO programs (Counts et. al., 2018). Ryan et. al. agrees with this by explaining how there are no national standards outlining training requirements for SROs. Only 11 states have even established specific training/certification requirements for SROs (Ryan et. al., 2017).

SRO Role and Training

Gray et. al. conducted a nationwide survey of public schools. They released the results and explained how many of the variables examined have complex interactions and are related to one another. They found that of the self-reported data, 43% of public schools had some type of security personnel present at the school at least once a week. When they broke this down by type of school they found 29% of elementary schools, 63% of middle schools, and 64% of high schools had this type of security. In total they found 46,290 of these personnel working full time at the school and 36,110 working part time at the school. That gives a ratio of 580 students to every 1 security person, when including all students (Gray et. al., 2015).

The survey found that the personnel at these schools had various roles. They participated in roles including security enforcement and patrol (90%), coordinating with local police and

emergency teams (88%), and mentoring students (66%), as well as many others (Gray et. al., 2015). Seeing how these officers have so many different roles, it is important to ask what they believe their primary role is, and then look at their daily activities to determine if these roles are actually occurring. The Theriot and Orme study mentioned above believed that the insignificant relationship found between SRO interactions and student's feelings of safety was probably due to the fact that 52% of the students reported no interactions with SROs during that school year. The study recommended that schools increase the number of opportunities students have to interact with the officers, even though the findings suggest that more interaction will not increase the student's feelings of safety. (Theriot & Orme, 2016). When we see how the officers spend their day, we can have a better understand of how much they are interacting with students and having an impact. This supports the need for these questions in the SRO interview found in Appendix A.

Another aspect to an officer's role, is the training they receive. It is important to understand the job they are expected to do, versus the training they have received. Some officers are assigned this role after being a regular officer and may not have much experience with children, which is why the question regarding their experience with youth is asked. One study by James et. al. describes the importance of training SROs to participate in crisis response. They believe that SROs should be incorporated with school crisis teams to better serve staff and students in traumatic situations. They discuss a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Model which trainings officers to diffuse and de-escalate situations without using force. With this counseling/mentoring role, officers can build trust and comfort with the students and they will be more likely to approach SROs with concerns about more serious situations. They found that when SROs are engaged more heavily in teaching and counseling students, fewer incidents of

school violence and criminal behavior are reported. This outcome may result from SROs' proactive rather than reactive approach to student problems (James, et. al., 2011). Overall, 13% of the public schools' surveys in Gray's study reported that at least one serious violent incident had occurred at school. Only 2% of public schools reported at least one physical attack or fight with a weapon and 58% reported physical attacks or fights without a weapon (Gray et. al., 2015). For this reason, we ask about number of violent incidents that occur at the schools the SRO interviewed works at. We also ask what training they have received and what discretion they have when handling these types of situations.

Finally, we want to understand what the schools expect the role of the officers to be and what the schools allow them to do. As mentioned previously, the government does not always regulate the roles and training that these officers have so each school may be different. Ryan et. al. looked at the increasing number of incidents in which school resource officers have been used to manage student disciplinary issues. The article addresses "issues concerning SROs being used to manage student misbehavior, lack of training, lack of policies regulating roles and responsibilities, and inadvertently promoting a school-to-prison pipeline" (Ryan et. al., 2017). They believe that there is an absence of enough training and clear policies which has resulted in numerous problems throughout the country. The article makes recommendations on the effective use of SROs. They suggest that schools: "(a) not use SROs to manage student misbehavior unless criminal in nature; (b) increase SRO training to include behavior management, child development, communication techniques, and disability awareness; (c) establish an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to delineate specific roles and responsibilities for SROs; and (d) include the SRO as a team member of the school-wide positive behavioral support (SWPBS) team to enhance safe school planning efforts" (Ryan et. al., 2017).

When schools adopt a memorandum of understanding (MOU), officer have clearly documented roles, expectations, and responsibilities and can better perform their jobs of maintaining and increasing safety in schools and communities (Ryan et. al., 2017). Again, this research supports the current study being conducted by interviewing officers in Monroe County.

Discussion

Through this review of the literature on school resource officers, it is clear that more research needs to be done due to the differences in findings. School safety has been of a heightened concern to the public and has sparked political debate across the country. Many want to provide funding for more school resource officers (SROs) or other armed security personnel (James & McCallion, 2014). It is unclear if SROs are helping or hurting the youth in schools because most SRO programs that exist are not being evaluated. Future research must answer this question with empirical evidence so that decisions can be made, and children can be kept safe in schools. The next piece of this research will include the methods and results of SRO interviews conducted in Monroe County, NY. The data collected will be compared to that of national survey data on resource officers. Due to the nature of interviewing children, surveying students regarding their feelings of safety and SRO interaction is not possible, but by asking certain questions found in Appendix A, we can start to get an idea of the impact the SROs have in these schools.

School Resource Officers in Monroe County

This research is being conducted to assess the roles of school resource officers and compare the responses of the sample in Monroe County, NY to those of national survey data that

is available. This is a qualitative study based on the research conducted on the school-to-prison pipeline and school resource officers as an intervention to school violence and student safety. The following will address the methods used to obtain a sample, create materials, and collect and analyze the data. Some research questions that will be examined include: What duties do resource officers believe they are intended for? How does administration utilize resource officers? What type of training have the officers received? What challenges do officers face in their roles?

Methodology

Sample

The sample for this study was of School Resource Officers in Monroe County, NY.   The research initially was going to include officers only from the city school district but through the literature review, there was belief that officers in suburban schools may have different experiences, therefore it was decided to include officers placed in suburban schools in Monroe County. A "snowball" sample, or convenience sample method was used to find participants. This method involves a primary data source referring other potential data sources to the researcher (Bhat, 2019). This chain of referrals can continue further as each participant can refer others. This sample on used two primary sources who then referred the researcher to the five participants. The advantages to using this method to create a sample was that this was quick and easy, as well as cost efficient. Since it was a convenience sample, all of the participants were located in the same area and therefore limited travel needed to be done. An email was sent to Chief Singletary in the city of Rochester who directed the research to a sergeant in the youth services unit. The sergeant said that Rochester Police Department employs 12 resource officers,

and she gave the names and contact information of three of the officers to interview. A sergeant at the Greece Police Department was also contacted, and he gave the names and contact information of the two officers employed by the Greece Police Department. In all, five officers were included in the research, three from the city school district and two from a suburban school district. Because of this sampling method, the resulting sample is not a random sample of the resource officers in Monroe County, NY. A disadvantage to this type of sample is that the participants who are being referred may have similar believes to the original source and therefore results may be biased (Bhat, 2019). Despite this, the resulting analysis should give valuable insight to the officers and their roles in this area and provide a foundation for future research.

Materials

In order to conduct this research, interview questions were developed. These questions can be found in Appendix A. Questions were created based on national surveys of schools and school resource officers. Some of these included questions regarding the officer's primary role, their training, and their greatest work-related challenge. Questions were left open-ended due to the nature of this qualitative research. Themes found in the responses will be used to conduct this qualitative analysis. The literature review helped guide theory that supported the questions being asked in the interviews. Questions were then reviewed on multiple occasions until the version in the document was decided upon.

Data Collection Methods

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted for collection data on the officer's personal histories, perspectives, and experiences. Researchers hypothesis that some themes that

will arise in the interviews will include long history of law enforcement, similar views of their role, and work-related challenges that are similar to each other, and those mentioned in the national survey. The semi-structured interview method allows the research to be flexible. Participant responses affected how, and which questions the researcher asked next. The data collection and research questions were adjusted iteratively depending on the interview flow. Through email, the interview dates and times were scheduled, and a location was chosen. Chart 1 shows this information. Once the interviewer arrived at the location and met with the officer, they found a place to sit to begin the interview. The interviewer used a laptop in order to write field notes for all five interviews. These field notes were used in the analysis.

Chart 1. Interview Schedule

Officer	Date/Time	Location Type
Officer 1- Suburb	Friday March 29, 2019, 8:00 AM	School
Officer 2- City	Thursday April 4, 2019, 9:30 AM	School
Officer 3- City	Thursday April 4, 2019, 11:00 AM	School
Officer 5- Suburb	Wednesday April 10, 2019, 8:00 AM	Police Department Office
Officer 4- City	Thursday April 11, 2019, 9:00 AM	School

Data Analysis Methods

Once the data was collected through interviews, two types of analysis was conducted. A content or thematic analysis will be done to examine patterns in officer responses. Thematic analysis emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns or "themes" within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes are important to the understand of school resources officers and their roles and experiences. Themes that researchers are interested in including the role the officer plays, their experiences in law enforcement and working with youth, the type of training they receive, their relationship with school administration, their feelings towards the job, and the

challenges they face. Anecdotal stories and experiences will also be shared in the analysis of the data collected.

Some of the questions asked in the interview are consistent with questions asked in national surveys. For example, the question regarding what the officer believes is their primary role, as well as what is their greatest work-related challenge, was asked in the same way as in the survey. This was done purposely so that responses in the interview can be compared to the national survey results. The responses will be coded to consistent with the answer choices available in the survey. One limitation of this is that some responses may not fit directly into a survey answer. This is why interviews were conducted, so that a wide range of responses could be given, which is not always possible with surveys. These methods will be used to draw conclusions about school resource officers in Monroe County, NY.

Results

Demographics

When looking at the demographics of the sample of five officers included in this research, we see many similarities. All five SROs interviews were male. According to a national survey of school resource officers conducted by Education Week Research Center, more than 8 in 10 resource officers are male (Kurtz, Lloyd, Harwin, Osher, 2018). The sample included two Hispanic officers and three white officers. Being as though this is only a convenience sample, it is difficult to compare this to national trends, as some officers in the county were not included in the sample. The locale of the school is another demographic of interest. Of the five officers, two were from the suburb and three from the city. The national survey found that 42% of officers are in suburban schools (Kurtz, et. al., 2018). All of the

officers interviewed were employed by the local town or city police department. Finally, the three city officers were assigned strictly to one school building, two of them being high schools and one being k-12. The two suburban officers were different in that they split all of the schools included in their district. Both had two high schools and then the rest of the middle and elementary schools were split so that the officers were responsible for 10 and 9 schools.

Roles and Duties

The school resource officer job is different from a traditional officer position in that it is working with a special population in a school environment. Working with youth is particularly different from dealing with the general public due to their brains still developing. The national survey found that three quarters of all officers had prior experience working with youth before they began and SRO. In the sample of officers interviewed three had serious experience working with youth. This experience included running a baseball program, working in summer camps as a teenager, and being a physical education teacher prior to a law enforcement career. The other two officers believed their experiences as a patrol cop during school hours and working mall security helped prepare them due to increased interactions with youth in those roles.

When discussing the school-to-prison pipeline, it is said that schools are using SROs for low level school discipline. When asking the officers if the school specifies what behaviors the officer can step in on, the officers had very similar responses. There was a theme that school rules are separate and enforced by the school and that the officer only steps in when it is an arrestable offense. Many times, they described stepping back and letting the administration or the school's security deal with situations and stepping in if the situation escalates. They described their relationship with administration as strong and having a mutual respect. Only one

officer mentioned the Memorandum of Understanding that the school district has with the law enforcement agency. A lot of times in lower level discipline at the school, officers act as a resource for the administration to consult with as well and give referrals and additional resources. Overall, they all believe that school rules fall under the code of conduct and are the administrations job until the acts become criminal.

The officers interviewed saw their primary role in different ways. Three of the officers mentioned safety and protection of students and staff as their primary role. Other themes included being a resource to the school administrators, teachers, and students. By being a resource to students, they are also acting as mentors and counselors and helping to create a positive relationship between youth and law enforcement. Looking at the national survey, 41% of SROs reported that enforcing laws is their primary role. Only 17% said their main role is mentoring, 7% said enforcing school discipline and 2% teaching. The remaining third of officers said their primary role was something else or a combination. In addition, 59% said their primary role is ensuring safety and security (Kurtz, et. al., 2018).

Work related challenges are important to understand because with better work conditions, work and relations can improve. Three of the officers mentioned the limitations and restrictions that are in place as a challenge. There is sometimes a gray area in how situations are handled, and you can only do so much. One officer mentioned how he needs to constantly thing outside of the box to find solutions to problems since situations aren't black and white. One officer believed their challenge was making sure the teachers understood their role because some teachers want the officers to enforce school rules and that is not their job. Finally, an officer was really interested in getting officers into the classroom. He believes that doing this more often and teaching the students about law enforcement and giving them more positive interactions can

help improve trust, safety, and overall police-community relations. Due to the nature of this open-ended interview format, more in depth answers were found for this question than the national survey had. About 30% of SROs reported that a lack of resources is their top work-related challenge. Among officers who said that their top challenge was something other than one of the options included on the survey, "the most frequent challenges were: 1. Lack of cooperation/support from administrators and staff 2. Safety and security of the school building 3. The influence of technology, including social media" (Kurtz, et. al., 2018).

When discussing active shooter preparedness in the schools, all of the officers mentioned the mandatory drills and lockdowns that the schools do each year. They believed that this was good practice to be sure that everyone in the building was on the same page and knew what to do in a real emergency. One officer believed that the schools should be doing more each year, even one a month. Another officer said that their day to day operations are not shadowed by the threat of a school shooter but that they are ready for it and have procedures to try to stop it before it gets to that point. The drills and plans are run by the administration, but the officers are part of the safety planning teams that help prepare the schools.

Training

When the officers were asked about training for their role, they all mentioned a New York State SRO training. One of the officers even said he was one of the SRO trainers for Monroe County. They said that the training consisted of teaching law enforcement philosophy and to think outside the box things. They also discussed juvenile differences. All of the officers at some point mentioned that prior road patrol experience and dealing with various types of calls for service helped to train them for the role. All of the officers had at least 10 years of

experience, with two officers having 17 and one having nearly 25 years of experience. Other types of trainings mentioned were specialized training for juvenile law, gangs and drugs, and mental health.

Students feelings of safety

Due to the nature of interviewing children, surveying students regarding their feelings of safety and SRO interaction is not possible for this study. In order to try to understand students' feelings of safety we asked certain questions in the interview including asking the officers to describe their typical day and where they spend most of their time. This question connected to the research that found that many students had no interactions with the officer. The officers interviewed said that they spend a lot of times in the hallways, especially between classes. The suburban officers spent less time in the halls and in the schools due to the fact that they were assigned many schools. Multiple officers mentioned the importance of having positive interactions with the students, such as reading to elementary students, or helping teach a class.

Other ways feelings of safety were evaluated was through observation. All of the schools where the interviews took place, the officer had their marked car parked right outside the main entrance. They were pulled up onto sidewalks and very clearly present, rather than blended in. This could be for deterrence purposes or simply so that the officer can respond and move quickly if a call came in. This could be intimidating to some students entering the school. In addition to the cars, the officers wore a full belt with their gun, taser, and handcuffs. All the officers wore vests; however, the suburban school officers wore khakis and a polo shirt whereas the city officers were in full blue uniform with the addition of their body worn camera. The belt itself can be intimidating but wearing the full uniform can make an officer seem unapproachable in a

school setting. Interestingly, the national survey saw almost 100% of officers had their gun and taser but only a small percentage (33%) had body warn cameras like the officers from the city (Kurtz, et. al., 2018).

Conclusion

This research caught only a small piece of the national research on School Resource officers. Only five officers in Monroe County, NY were interviewed to get a general understanding of their roles and duties, training, and experience within the job. The resulting analysis gives valuable insight to the officers and their roles in this area and provides a foundation for future research. The research questions examined included: What duties do resource officers believe they are intended for? How does administration utilize resource officers? What type of training have the officers received? What challenges do officers face in their roles? Overall, we found interesting themes about the role the officer plays, their experiences in law enforcement and working with youth, the type of training they receive, their relationship with school administration, their feelings towards the job, and the challenges they face. These themes are important to the understand of school resources officers and their roles and experiences. Future research could expand this particular study by including both surveys and interviews and utilizing a greater, more representative sample of officers.

Youth Courts and the Community

Working Paper 4

Introduction

In 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that there were 41,910,114 youth age 10-19 in the United States. This is 13% of the total U.S. population. This is a special population due to their lack of development and independence. As a special population, they are treated differently in the criminal justice system. Because of this, there are specific procedures for dealing with juveniles, such as juvenile detention centers and courts. When a juvenile commits a crime, it is typically referred to as a "delinquent act" and treated as a civil case instead of criminal. A juvenile delinquent in the US is a person younger than 18 (except in a few states where it is 17) who violates a law, policy or ordinance. Depending on the type and severity of the offense committed, it is possible for people under 18 to be charged and treated as adults.

Youth courts, also known as teen or peer courts, are programs designed to divert young, first-time offenders from the traditional juvenile criminal justice system. It is an informal process that incorporates components of restorative justice to hold youth accountable for their offenses and prevent future delinquency (National Association of Youth Courts, 2019). This paper focuses on youth courts and specifically looks to answer the following research questions: How are youth courts used in various communities across the United States? Which courts have been most successful? What are some of the biggest challenges they face? Additionally, a youth court observation was conducted in the city of Rochester, NY.

Background of Youth Courts

Youth courts are a specialized juvenile diversion program designed to prevent the formal processing of typically first-time juvenile offenders within the juvenile justice system. As of 2010, there were more than 1,150 teen/youth courts operating in 49 states. These courts are

different from a regular juvenile court in that they involve youth primarily ages 11-17 that are first time offenders of mostly non-violent crimes (Development Services Group, Inc., 2010). The most typical offenses that youth courts will accept are theft, vandalism, underage drinking, disorderly conduct, assault, possession of marijuana, tobacco violations, and curfew violations (Fischer, 2007). Most of the sanctions they receive involve community service rather than being sentenced to a juvenile detention facility. This is a non-traditional approach to our criminal justice system that has a very community-based focus and philosophy. Youth courts have become increasingly popular in the United States since the 1970s but began increasing exponentially in the 1990s. The concept however existed at least 50 years prior to then. There is knowledge of a court in 1940 in Mansfield, OH which heard minor bicycle traffic violations committed by minors. This court had teen judges and imposed sanctions such as essays, which are still used in courts today. (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002). The main goal of youth court is to hold juveniles accountable for their behavior (Butts & Buck, 2000).

Youth Court Process and Structure

Teen courts are staffed by youth volunteers who serve in the roles of jurors, lawyers, bailiffs, and clerks. Teen courts usually function in cooperation with the local juvenile justice system, schools, and/or community organizations. Most teen courts require an admission of guilt. Hearings occur like a traditional court, before a judge and jury, with the jury deliberating to determine an appropriate sanction. Often, sanctions will involve the defendant's making restitution to someone harmed or inconvenienced by their actions. One of the more common sentences is community service. In many jury-based programs it is mandatory that the offender

serve on a teen court jury. Adult volunteers serve as trainers, advisors and coordinators of the teen courts; some courts have a small paid staff (Butts & Buck, 2000).

There are various court models that are used. The first model, and most popular, is the adult judge model. In this model, there is an adult judge, a youth judge, peer jury, and youth tribunal. Butts, Buck, and Coggeshall found that of their survey respondents, 47 percent of them used only the adult judge model. When they accounted for courts that used more than one model, 60% used the adult judge model. The next model was a peer jury model which accounted for 22 percent of all teen court cases. The last two models are the youth judge and the tribunal models which were least used and only accounted for 7 percent of all the courts surveyed (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002). An adult judge model has youth serving as jurors and attorneys with a volunteer adult judge. The youth judge model is similar but uses a youth as the judge instead of an adult. The peer jury model has youth on a jury but does not have youth attorneys. Instead, someone presents the case facts and then the jury asks the defendant questions directly. Finally, the youth tribunal model has youth attorneys present the case to a youth judge, and there are no jurors (Development Services Group, Inc., 2010).

The courts were also operated by various different groups including police departments, local courts, probation, schools, and non -profits. They found that 58 percent of courts operated by local courts and probation agencies used the adult judge model. Those hosted by schools, private agencies, and other not-profit organizations, 48 percent used the adult judge model. Many of the programs used mixed methods (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002).

Youth Courts in the Community

One way that the court plays a role in the community is through its system of sanctions. In the court, every youth who has admitted guilt or is found guilty receives some form of sanction. In many communities, these sanctions are used to do more than just punish the offender. Sanctions attempt to help the youth learn from their actions and attempt to repair the damage they caused the community or specific victims. The primary way they give back to the community is through community service projects. Some courts require the youth to write apologies to their victims or essays about what they have learned from the experience (Butts & Buck, 2000). In addition, 53 percent of youth courts require defendants to participate in jury duty at least once as a mandatory sanction to their cases (youthcourt.net, 2019). Together, these sanctions help contribute positively to the communities they are in and community members feel as though the youth has been held responsible for their actions.

Youth courts has potential value to the community in monetary ways as well. Due to the complexity of the programs, it is difficult to evaluate the costs and benefits. There are various estimates as to the average annual budget of a youth court with averages given such as $32,767 (youthcourt.net, 2019) and $49,000 (Schneider, 2008). If you use the higher average cost, you find that this is about $430 per youth. When looking at the traditional juvenile system, incarcerating a youth costs between $23,000 and $43,000 a year and placing a youth on probation costs $1,635. This being said, the youth court operates at a fourth of the costs the traditional system (Schneider, 2008). Part of the reason the youth courts can operate with such a small budget is due to both the adult and youth volunteers. Again, it is difficult to estimate the number of volunteer hours and calculate the monetary value it adds. One study estimates that there are more than 100,000 youth benefiting each year from participating as volunteers in youth

courts across the United States (Pearson & Jurich, 2005). The average volunteer receives 10 hours of training and participates in various cases throughout the year (youthcourts.net, 2019). This volunteer power holds a lot of value in the operation of the courts.

These youth courts allow for additional community participation through partnerships with community groups and organizations. Courts partner with government and non-profit services so the youth can obtain skills training, treatment, counseling, and job placement. They also work with many community programs like the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs. In New York City, the courts are run through the Center for Court Innovation, which is a community group. Some court are run within schools themselves, completely separate from the criminal justice system. Overall, studies find that communities support these courts and that the courts are perceived positively. One study found that although they noticed positive community feedback, the court was not widely known or understood. If more resources could be put towards a campaign to promote the court, it may attract more support and volunteers. (Butts & Buck, 2000).

The map shown in image 1 is of the Youth/Teen Courts in New York State. This is the list of courts that are known to the Association of New York State Youth Courts. A point density spatial analysis tool was used to see the density of courts in the state. The map shows that the most courts are found in New York City, and in Buffalo and Albany. This is consistent with the population of these areas, although Rochester and Syracuse did not have a high density of courts. It is not an exhaustive list, as some courts may be unknown to the association, but it is interesting to see the areas that do have these courts. The courts in NYS are mostly run through the local Youth Bureau, although there are some run by the courts, schools, and police departments. Others, such as Rochester and those found in NYC, are run through community

groups such as the Center for Youth in Rochester and the Center for Court Innovation in NYC (ANYSYC, 2019).
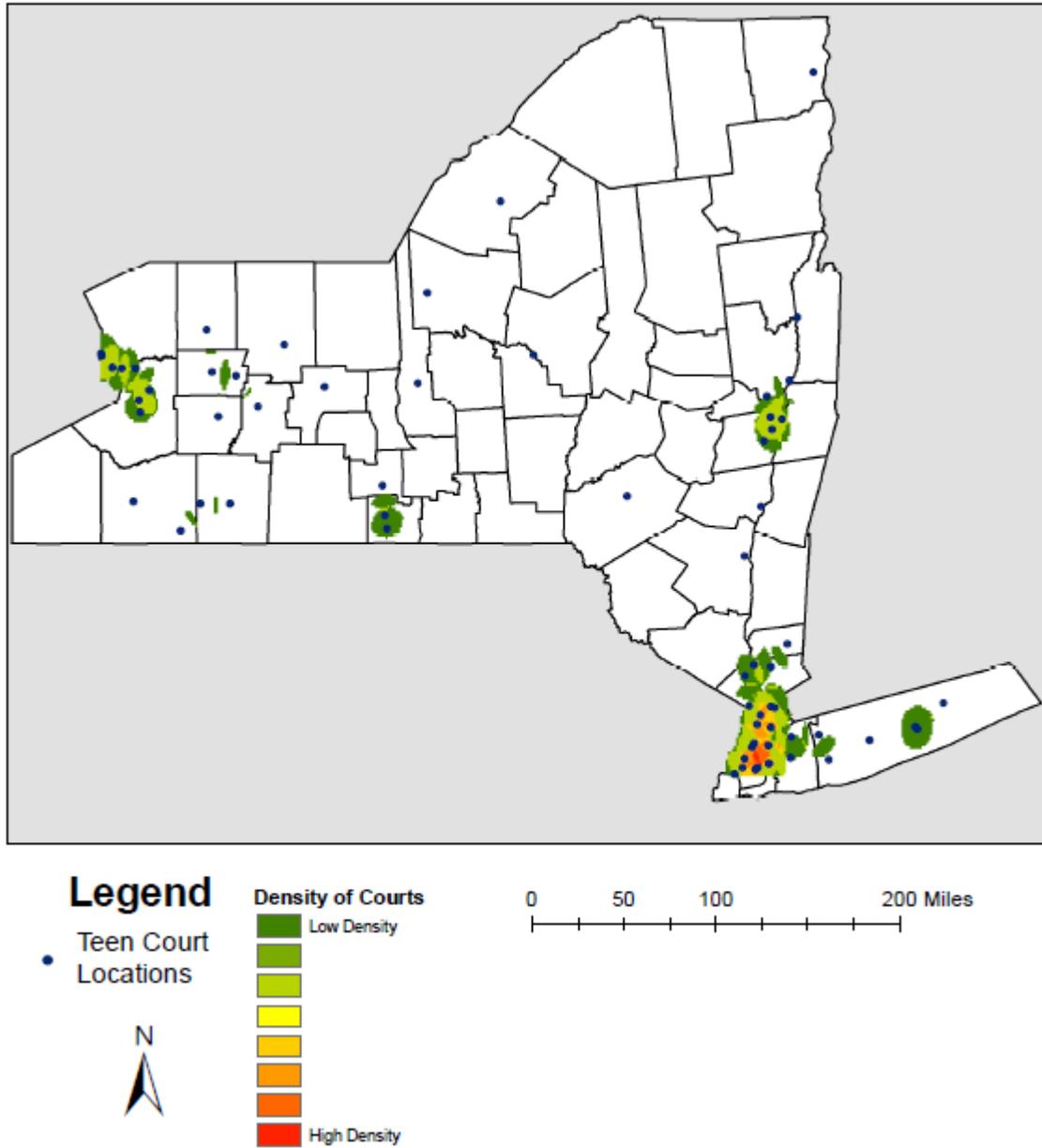

Image 1. Map of Teen Courts in New York State, and Density of those points. Data from ANYSYC

Youth Court Legislation

Since the courts are run by different organizations across the country, there becomes a debate regarding whether or not legislation is needed for the operation of youth court programs. Over the last few years, legislation on youth courts has increased. There are at least 25 states that had enacted legislation on teen courts as of the writing of this report. Some legislation is very detailed and comprehensive, whereas, other legislation was very broad and general (NAYC, 2019). Heward's research looked at legislation across many states and found common themes that appeared. The components that appeared most frequently in teen court legislation were whether the program is adjudicatory or dispositional, the types of cases the programs may handle, dispositional options, and funding (Heward, 2006).

There are many reasons why states may want to legislate teen courts. One reason is to increase consistency and maintain minimal standards within their state regarding types of cases and sanctions supported. This helps with data collection and evaluation as well having standards so there can be an increase in program effectiveness. Finally, legislation can also provide funding, mandate state support, and provide limited immunity from civil liability. It can provide a resource for referrals and dispositional options (Heward, 2006).

Evaluation of Youth Courts

There are various program evaluations from across the country that look at different measures of success. Nochajski and colleagues utilized data from 120 participants in Livingston County, NY who participated in the Youth Court Program (LCYC). In order to have some form of comparison group, they used another program that they had in the county called the Community Service Program. They matched participants by age and gender to create a

comparison group of those that participated in Community Service Program only (CSO). One of the most predominant findings was found through observation. They found the staff were hard working and dedicated individuals. They also found that methods of record keeping were lacking and therefore better data collection and maintenance could advance evaluations and allow for more and better collaboration across service providing organizations. As far as recidivism, they found a significant reduction in recidivism for both groups. When comparing to other teen court programs, it is clear that these courts had significantly lower rates of recidivism, demonstrating the effectiveness of both programs in improving outcomes (Nochajski, et. al., 2010). One issue with this evaluation is the programs they compared both use a philosophy of community service and differ from the traditional incarceration method of punishment.

Povitsky and colleagues worked with Teen Courts in Maryland. They knew that there was very little research and evaluation on teen courts, and almost none with rigorous design. They used an experimental design to examine the effectiveness of teen court in reducing recidivism in an 18 month follow up period and improving the attitudes and opinions of juvenile offenders. Their comparison was done with a control group of youth who were formally processed. This evaluation followed the Program Development and Evaluation (PDE) method which was created to assist schools, communities, and other organizations with creating programs. They conducted before and after self-report surveys and found that self-reported delinquency post teen court was higher than those in the control group. They also found that the teen court participants had significantly lower scores on a scale of belief in conventional rules than had youth who were processed in the Department of Juveniles Services. They found that although the theories of restorative justice, diversion, and labeling all point to teen court working, their findings did not support that (Povitsky Stickly, Connell, Wilson, & Gottfredson,

2008). One reason for these differences found could be due to the difference of the groups prior to the intervention of teen court. In addition, the research noted that the surveys used for self-reported delinquency was the same for those who went to teen court and those that did not. They did not account for the way the non-participants would answer questions regarding delinquency since participation in teen court. Their findings on recidivism were not significant but their results were in the direction of teen court having higher recidivism than the control group in the 18 month follow up (Povitsky, et. al, 2008).

Bright and colleagues researched the teen courts in Maryland. Their report presented data on the processes, outcomes, and perspectives of courts using data collected in three different courts in Maryland. The study also looked at recidivism by matching cases from the courts to those of the state's Juvenile Services. Overall, the study found the three programs offer an alternative to traditional case processing with lower recidivism rates while garnering support from youth and parents. Although the courts had similar structure and procedure, they did vary in some ways. The one big difference they noticed was the practice of conducting concurrent versus sequential cases in the same courtroom. They also found that there was a lack of consistency in types of offenses handled and, the recommended sanctions. In all three locations, youth who did not complete the program were more likely to recidivate and be referred to the traditional system (Bright, et. al., 2013).

Butts, Buck, and Coggeshall evaluated four different youth courts. The locations were teen courts in Arizona, Maryland, Alaska, and Missouri. Their report focused exclusively on youth recidivism as the measure of success with a quasi-experimental design. They collected data from more than 500 youth across the sites. They found that within 6 months, the youth who participated in the youth court were significantly less likely to reoffend than the comparison

group. Overall, they believe that the findings suggest that teen courts represent a promising alternative to the traditional system (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002).

The McDowell Group in 2010 evaluated youth courts in Alaska. The group looked specifically at re-offense rate. They found that Alaska youth courts had a low re-offense rate after six months, which is an approximate three percent of cases from 2007-2009. They recognized that the courts are very complex and re-offense as the only evaluation is not a good judge of success and benefits of the courts. They believed it was important to communicate with the youth through interviews and surveys to determine how they had benefited from the program. They found that youth benefit in many ways, "including learning about the law, learning new skills such as public speaking, feeling more like a part of the community, being more thoughtful about others, and feeling better prepared for their futures" (McDowell Group, 2010).

Overall, the research of various youth court evaluations across the country have found mixed results. It is clear, however, that teen courts are extremely complex, and just using re-offense rate as a measure of success is not sufficient. Understanding the financial and social implication and benefits of the court is important to understanding its overall success. Many evaluations found that the community supported these programs and benefited from the sanctions that they imposed. They also found that the youths attitudes changed and they were able to access services and build skills needed to be successful in the community.

Challenges and Limitations

Youth courts face a host of challenges when implementing and maintaining their program model as well as when evaluating their outcomes. One of the biggest challenges that is mentioned in numerous studies is funding. A lot of these programs have little funding and

require paid staff to help run the program (McDowell Group, 2010). One study found that "40 percent of the programs they surveyed reported "some problems" (25 percent) or "serious problems" (15 percent) with funding uncertainties" (Butts & Buck, 2000).

Another challenge faced by courts that many studies discuss include the number of participants as both defendants and volunteers. Referrals to the court can come from various avenues including local law enforcement and schools. Many courts faced a challenge of a lack of referrals. Butts and Buck (2000) found that approximately one third of the courts in their study faced problems with lack of case referrals. Recruiting enough teen volunteers, and retaining those that join, also posed a participant challenge. These volunteers acted as the attorneys, judges, and jurors and were needed for the court to function, but it was difficult for some courts to maintain adequate numbers (McDowell Group, 2010; Butts & Buck, 2000).

Some youth courts in small and rural communities faced many of the above-mentioned challenges which in some cases required extra planning and resources to overcome. Due to the nature of their community size, there can be a lack of anonymity for both defendants and volunteers, and increased issues with lack of funding, lack of youth volunteers, and small caseloads (McDowell Group, 2010).

In addition to challenges in implementation and process, courts also faced some limitations in data collection and evaluation. The McDowell Group found that in some cases when a referral or diversion was made, data for the offense was missing. History data was not complete or consistent and sometimes past history in the youth court was not recorded with official records. Having all these different databases of data that were not connected caused issues when trying to evaluate different outcome variables such as recidivism.

Recommendations for Improvements

There are many recommendations to help improve the limitation of data collection mentioned previously. Researchers suggest that all youth courts have a data system capable of generating operating and impact statistics, and that the systems are consistent with other youth courts. Most courts may already have such a system, but the courts must be provided with standard data definitions and collection protocols to ensure consistency among all the courts. In addition to standard data collection, information regarding their process, internal decisions, grants, and other funding should be efficiently stored so reports and analysis can be conducted.

In order to improve the assessment and documentation of youth court effectiveness, courts used a similar set of questionnaires and surveying methodologies for comparison purposes. "Questionnaires and surveys are among the few ways to document the many important but intangible impacts of youth court such as personal growth, changes in attitude or intention, gains in knowledge or skills, etc." (McDowell Group, 2010).

Rochester Teen Court Observation

The Rochester Teen Court in Rochester, NY is a teen court program run by the Center for Youth, an organization in the city that focuses on providing various services to young people. Their services range from counseling, to shelter, to education, to referrals. This particular teen court is a for nonviolent offenders, ages 16-18. The court acts as a sentencing court where defendants participate voluntarily after accepting responsibility for their actions in a traditional courtroom. It uses an adult judge model where local judges preside over the proceedings, and the youth volunteers serve as jurors, attorneys, and court personnel. The youth volunteers are between the ages of 14 and 20 and receive between 30-40 hours of training. The court focuses

on restorative justice and the sanctions the court gives includes community service, letters of apology, and skill-building workshops (Center for Youth, 2019). In addition, all defendants are required to participate as a juror for a future teen court session.

On Wednesday, April 17th, 2019, I was invited by the Teen Court Program manager from the Center for Youth to observe a teen court session. The teen court session saw two cases during its one-hour meeting time. This was the April meeting, as the court meets once a month for adjudication. In addition, each month there is a meeting for new juror orientation, restorative justice court, and a defendant workshop. The court session took place at the city Hall of Justice in one of the regular court rooms. I brought a notebook in order to take notes of my observations to be shared here. Details of the specific cases are not included, as they were confidential, but general observations regarding the process and themes observed are shared. In the courtroom there were three youth jurors who sat in the juror booth and each wore a sticker indicating their role. There was a youth prosecutor and defense attorney, an adult judge, and various professionals, family, and friends in the booths observing. All of the observers in the room signed in on a clipboard maintained by a center for youth employee.

The process began by everyone in the courtroom standing and taking an oath, followed by the jurors taking an oath to listen carefully to the case and be fair in judgement. The process then continued with the first case by both the youth prosecutor and youth defense attorney making opening statements. The prosecutor then called an officer to the stand to read the case documents and then answer some questions regarding the seriousness of the offense. The defense then called the defendant to the stand and asked questions regarding the case, as well as what the defendant learned from the incident and their future plans. After questioning was complete, both attorneys went to talk to the judge in private to discuss possible sanctions. They

came back and presented closing remarks where they made recommendations to the jury on the sanction the sought. The jury went to deliberate and came back to present a sanction that was consistent with what was recommended. This same process occurred for the second case.

Some general themes and observations were noticed, many of which were consistent with research mentioned previously in this paper. One interesting observation made was that the officer was an SRO from a local school but was not associated with the defendant or the case. My belief is that they volunteered their time to the court so that police could be represented and present, while offering their expertise on the criminal justice system. Some of the challenges mentioned in research was seen in the Rochester court. It seemed as though they may have had a lack of volunteers due to the fact that they only had three jurors. The judge made a comment before the proceedings began that if they had one less, they wouldn't have been able to proceed. Another challenge could be a lack of referrals. The court only meets once a month and this meeting only saw two cases, both of which had incidents that occurred in February. The sergeant from the Rochester Police Departments Youth Unit that introduced me to the Teen Court Program manager had told me that SROs made a lot of referrals to teen court, however for these cases, neither were from an incident at a school. Another limitation seen in research was the lack of anonymity. This did not seem to be a problem in Rochester since none of the youth knew each other. The judge confirmed this by asking all of them before the session began.

Finally, there were some observations regarding the cases and sanctions. Both cases didn't necessarily fall into a category of the typical cases heard. This could be unique to the session that I observed but it is unclear. Both cases went to traditional court to plead guilty and then were referred to the teen court by the judge for adjudication. Once consistency was that they were both non-violent first offenses. Another unique aspect of these cases is that neither

included a sanction of community service. Both had an educational themed sanction and jury

duty, although community service was a sanction option. Similar to other teen courts, their will

be follow up and case dismissal if sanction requirements are met.

Conclusion

Youth courts are designed to prevent the formal processing of first-time juvenile

offenders within the juvenile justice system. This is a non-traditional approach to our criminal

justice system that has a very community-based focus and philosophy. Most of the sanctions the

youth receive involve community service rather than being sentenced to a juvenile detention

facility. With this concept existing since the 1940s, and increasingly expanding since the 1990s,

it is important that these programs are evaluated for effectiveness and are focused holding the

juveniles accountable for their behavior and allowing them to develop and become better

community members.

Appendix A

School Resource Office Semi-Structure Interview Questions

Official Job Title? School (city, suburban). Level (middle, high, elementary)

1. Introduce yourself and your background.
    Years in law enforcement, years in this job

2. Did you have experience working with youth before this position?

3. Describe your average day at the school?
    Where are you spending your most time (halls, office, classrooms, etc.) how often at the school(s)

4. Does your school specify what types of student disciplinary issues you can intervene in (e.g., tardiness, defiance)?

5. What do you believe is your primary role?
    (enforcing laws, mentoring, enforcing school discipline, teaching, other)

6. What type of training have you received for this role?
    (responding to active shooter, conflict de-escalation, working with youth, mental health, mentoring, working with special ed students, child trauma, the teen brain, other)

7. What do you carry with you during the typical school day?
    (handcuffs, guns, baton, mace, taser, camera, etc.)

8. What is your biggest work-related challenge? What can be Improved?

9. Does the school have any training for teachers for conflict mediation, classroom discipline, etc.? Do you help conduct any trainings?

10. How often do you encounter students with weapons in schools? What is your mandated response?
    Discretion?

11. How much emphasis is on school preparedness for an active shooter? Explain. Best practices.

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