THESIS SIGNATURE PAGE

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

THESIS TITLE

PARENTAL CHILDREARING PRACTICES AND RECIDIVISM:
AN EXTENSION OF GOTTFREDSON AND HIRSCHI'S GENERAL
THEORY OF CRIME

AUTHOR:

Donna-Marie Rose Cruickshank

DATE OF SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE: August 6, 2003

THE THESIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

Robert E. L. Roberts PhD.
THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Kristin Bates PhD.
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Valerie Callanen PhD.
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER
TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS ABSTRACT ii
DEDICATION iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF STUDY 1
II. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW 2
III. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 9
IV. HYPOTHESES 14
V. THESIS MODEL 15
VI. DATA AND METHOD 16
VII. RESULTS 23
VIII. CONCLUSION 31
IX. COMMENTS 33
X. REFERENCES 36
THESIS ABSTRACT

For decades researchers have emphasized the direct effects of various forms of social control on delinquent behavior. Gottfredson and Hirschi’s, *A General Theory of Crime*, places the cause of delinquency squarely on insufficient childrearing practices of primary caretakers. Using data from official records as well as the self-reported behavior and family characteristics of adjudicated juvenile offenders, this project is a quasi-experimental design testing the extent to which Gottfredson and Hirschi’s theoretical model may help to explain recidivism among juvenile offenders. This study is not designed to test the general theory, per se. Rather, it explores whether the theory can help make sense of ways in which the dynamics of parent-child relations are related to juvenile recidivism. Overall, the findings are mixed.
DEDICATION

To My Sons

Thomas William Moreno
Michael Anthony Moreno

and

To the Little One we did not get the chance to know.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

- Eugene Fields (1850 – 1895)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special note of appreciation to the members of my thesis committee for guiding me through the process of completing this thesis

Robert E. L. Roberts, PhD.
Kristin Bates, PhD.
and
Valerie Callanen, PhD.

A special note of appreciation to
Allen Risley, Associate Director
Social and Behavioral Research Institute
for introducing me to the intricacies of doing social research and for his never-ending support and advice throughout my academic endeavors

A special note of appreciation to
Sheldon Zhang, PhD.
for including me on the research team for the
National Institute of Justice Evaluation of
Boot Camp Drug Treatment Programs

And, a very special note of appreciation to my husband, Jack whose support gives me the liberty to reach my goals. He truly is the foundation that secures the string of my balloon.
INTRODUCTION

The primacy of family interaction with regard to a young person’s prosocial maturity has long been a major concern in the study of social deviancy, delinquency, and criminal behavior. Pushing back the development of such behavior early into the life cycle, Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi in, *A General Theory of Crime* (1990), make the assumption that parents and other significant family members wield omnipotent influence over the decision-making processes of their young charges. The authors contend it is through early childhood socialization when the relationship between parents and the very young is virtually uncomplicated in terms of who is in authority, that people acquire the ability to exert control over their actions throughout the life cycle. Furthermore, the prosocialization process must continue throughout the school years when, it is well known, things are likely to change as the child enters adolescence and reasoning skills increase. For it is then that teenagers are likely to test the limits of parental authority (97-105).

The purpose of this study is to test the extent to which Gottfredson and Hirschi’s General Theory of Crime may help to explain recidivism among juvenile offenders. Thus, this study is not designed to test the general theory, per se. Rather, it explores whether the theory can help make sense of ways in which the dynamics of parent-child relations are related to juvenile recidivism.

Despite developmental changes during adolescence, the authors assert that parents or other primary caretakers must; (1) continue to monitor the youth’s behavior, (2) recognize deviant behavior when it occurs, and (3) punish such behavior
By enforcing reasonable and ongoing, consistent discipline during adolescence, these components of successful childrearing instills the youngster with the sense that there are consequences to misbehavior and selfishness. Youths who grasp this knowledge learn to delay gratification, become more independent, and possess the discipline necessary to resist the "temptations of youth" when faced with the opportunity to commit delinquent acts (97).

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Grounded in the classical tradition of Hobbes [1651], Bentham [1789], and Beccaria [1764], Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi's theory assumes that human conduct is the self-interested pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (5). At this rudimentary level, human behavior does not distinguish between criminal and non-criminal acts, only that crime is not novel in that it nourishes the "motives or desires it [crime] is intended to satisfy (5)." Gottfredson and Hirschi make a distinction between crime and criminality. They define crime as "acts of force or fraud undertaken in the pursuit of self-interest (15)." They define criminality as "low self-control" (82 and 137). Their theory advances the idea that low self-control, defined as the degree to which a person is vulnerable to the temptations of the moment (87), when in conjunction with criminal opportunity, is "the individual-level cause of crime (232)."

Relying on the supposition that criminality is inextricably tied to social control theory, the negotiation between people and the greater society to restrain each
individual’s natural tendency toward pleasure and short-term gratification,
Gottfredson and Hirschi point to the childrearing practices of parents as key to the
development of self-control, the precursor to non-delinquent behavior in the young.

When the ability to restrain hedonistic desires is minimal and concurrent
with the opportunity to commit crime, the conditions for criminal acts to occur are
satisfied. Such lack of restraint will most likely result in the commission of a crime or
non-criminal, risky behavior the authors cite as analogous to crime acts (91). Under
this paradigm, not only is the individual’s predisposition toward risky behavior and/or
crime immediate, it is enduring. In the case of criminal acts the person who lacks
self-restraint and commits crime will continue to do so because it satisfies the here-
and-now gratification without concern for the long-term consequences to themselves
or others.

Although lack of concern for consequences does not compel a person to
commit crime and can be counteracted by situational conditions or other properties of
the individual (89), the authors suggest that persons who exhibit these tendencies are
more likely in all periods of life to commit crime when the opportunity to do so
exists. These folks are also likely to engage in risk-taking behavior such as smoking,
alcohol and drug use, gambling, and illicit sex; acts considered by Gottfredson and
Hirschi as analogous to crime. In addition, they tend to be impulsive, physical (as
opposed to mental), present-oriented, and therefore more inclined to engage in
criminal and analogous acts than those who possess a greater sense of consequential
outcomes and the ability to regulate one’s behavior (90).
Since Gottfredson and Hirschi describe the “nature” of the diminished
capacity for self-regulation as being closely connected to their descriptions of
criminal acts (137), they conclude that adolescents insufficient in this attribute tend to
gravitate to the street. Furthermore, these young people are unreliable, more risk­
taking, adventuresome, and reckless than their nondelinquent counterparts. Other theorists (Thrasher 1927; Shaw 1929; Cohen 1955; Matza 1964; Katz 1988) also
support this viewpoint and add that some adolescents are attracted to hedonistic activities because such deviance is more gratifying than the mundane.

Of the many reasons outlined by Gottfredson and Hirschi as to why people
engage in risk-taking behavior, five components link crime and other analogous acts to parental insufficiencies in instilling a sense of self-restraint in the young.

First, Criminal acts provide immediate gratification of desires. Unlike people
who tend to defer gratification, persons lacking in this ability tend to have a concrete here-and-now orientation.

Second, Criminal acts provide easy or simple gratification of desires. People, who lack diligence, tenacity, or persistence in a long-term course of action, are more likely to be drawn to crime. Crime provides a way to make money without going to work, or exerting revenge without the constraints of litigation.

Third, Criminal acts are exciting, risky, or thrilling. People seeking the thrill of the moment tend to be adventuresome, active, and physical. For those who have not learned how to channel their energies in a non-criminal way, crime is exciting, risky, and thrilling.
Fourth, *Crimes provide few or meager long-term benefits*. People who are not taught to forestall gratification tend to be little interested in long-term academic or occupational pursuits. For these individuals, crime satisfies immediate desires.

Fifth, *Crimes require little skill or planning*. One of the defining aspects of crime is that it is simple and easy. People whom self-justify impulsivity need not have academic skills or formal technical training to commit crime (89).

**NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CHILDDRearing**

In order to guide a youth away from the temptations of delinquent behavior, Gottfredson and Hirsch tell us that “someone must (1) monitor the child’s behavior; (2) recognize deviant behavior when it occurs; and (3) punish such behavior (97).”

There are, however, some family characteristics the authors outline as potential impediments (risk factors) to adequate childrearing practices (97-105). For example, dramatic changes have taken place in families over the past several decades. Dual-income households may compromise a parent’s time at home during those critical hours when the youth comes home from school. This is likely the case when the primary caretaker is a single parent and sole support of the family. Then again, if parent(s) are able to be home at those critical hours, it may be difficult for them to recognize wanton behavior because of their own history of high-risk activities or lawbreaking. If the parent(s) time and energy is compromised by the size of the family, the emotional investment in the youth and the wherewithal to punish are likely to be compromised as well.
Parental Monitoring of Behavior

“The connection between social control and Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory could not be more direct than in the case of parental monitoring of the child (99).” When parents take an interest in monitoring the whereabouts and activities of their children and generally over-see their well-being, they presumably are able to not only teach their young how to conduct themselves, but also to teach children how to avoid risky or criminal acts on their own. If monitoring is lacking, childhood misbehavior is likely to continue throughout adolescence, furthering a stronger tendency to commit crime as adults (99).

Recognition of Misbehavior

Closely linked to parental monitoring is the ability of parents to recognize and punish deviant behavior when they see it occurring. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi these are two of the principle tenets of successful childhood socialization. Stopping short of biological positivism that asserts individual behavior is genetically determined, the authors reason some people are more likely than others to inadequately socialize their young toward prosocial behavior, not because they are innately unable to do so, but as a consequence of their own inadequate socialization or their own participation in risky or criminal behavior. Gottfredson and Hirschi’s model necessitates that parental concern for the welfare and behavior of their young be prime (99).
Single Parent Family/Mother or Primary Caretaker Working Outside the Home

Are the child-parent, or parent-child bond and the clout of informal social control threatened in single parent households? Gottfredson and Hirschi find, "The model we are using suggests that, all things being equal, one parent is sufficient (103)." That is, a single parent can accomplish successful childrearing, teach life skills by example, and provide monitoring. However, the caveat is all things are not always equal. When there is only one parent in the household, that parent (usually the mother) is away from home a substantial period of time in an effort to provide the income necessary to keep the family solvent; resulting in diminished abilities to monitor the youth's activities. This, in turn, is likely to lead to simple mischievousness, or worse, delinquency, in those left alone.

Parental Criminality

One of the important inhibitive background factors that influence the effectiveness of adequate childrearing practices, principally recognition and punishment of deviant behavior, is the criminality of parents or other significant others. When parents or other family members participate in risky or criminal activities themselves, the ability to recognize youthful misbehavior is greatly reduced. In addition, the incarceration of parents or other family members severely compromises and disrupts the formation of attachment bonds critical in forming a youth's self-identity consistent with prosocial behavior (Hirschi 1969).

According to Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory, when adolescents form such "analogous-to-crime" habits, such as smoking, alcohol and other drug usage, early in
life, it is yet another outward manifestation of inadequate monitoring and the inability
of parents to recognize risk-taking behavior in offspring (106 and 140).

**Punishment of Misbehavior**

Although the approval-disapproval process is part of recognizing good
behavior and punishing misbehavior, Gottfredson and Hirschi did not elaborate on a
disciplinary model affording the most successful outcome. They do, however,
contend, “Effective punishment by the parent or major caretaker . . . usually entails
nothing more than explicit disapproval of unwanted behavior (100).” The work of
Braithwaite (1989) provides a framework parents and other significant others might
consider when exerting non-physical discipline on their young charges whether
during childhood or throughout adolescence.

Braithwaite’s theory of reintegrative shaming is manifested by gestures of
forgiveness and reacceptance by parents and other significant family members once
the youth is rebuked for misbehavior. In this way the behavior itself is labeled
deviant rather than the person. When one is labeled a bad person, s/he is then
stigmatized and perhaps outcast by the significant someone in that person’s life. It
comes as no surprise that when this happens the bond between teens, their parents and
significant others is impaired, and the clout of informal social control is severely
threatened (Braithwaite 1989:55). When these bonds are diminished, youths are
likely to gravitate to peers and/or to the streets. In addition, onset age of delinquent
behavior is likely to occur early. It should also be noted that when the youngster has
the perception that the family is still supportive after misbehavior is acknowledged,
the mutual attachment and commitment reduces the likelihood the effects of reintegrated shaming will be rejected (Braithwaite 1989).

Certainly, for youths who have been arrested and incarcerated, the stigmatizing effects of labeling can be far-reaching and lifelong. Nevertheless, according to Braithwaite, when the use of reintegrative shaming is incorporated into childrearing practices, there is a greater potential for attachment between the parent and child, thereby increasing the likelihood of prosocial behavior. Under this paradigm, the presence of reintegrative shaming in childrearing practices conforms to Gottfredson and Hirschi’s notion that deviant behavior be acknowledged and punished in such a way that the bonds of parental attachment to child be maintained (98).

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE


Focusing on one aspect of the authors’ theory, self-control, these studies show varied support for the relationship between low self-control, crime, and other risk-taking behavior. Strongest in support is Pratt and Cullen’s (2000) meta-analysis on
1 empirical studies derived from seventeen independent data sets. Their results suggest, "... on an absolute level ... it appears that low self-control must be considered an important predictor and the general theory warrants a measure of acceptance (953)."

Of the tests providing mixed support for the theory (Hay 2001; Arnekleve et al. 1998; Gibbs, Giever and Martin 1998; Burton, Jr. and Cullen, et al. 1998; Benson and Moore 1992); most found although there is a link between self-control and crime, the strength of the correlations is not overpowering. Hay (2001) examined the two aspects of parenting underlying Baumrind’s (1966) authoritative parent theory, one that is also concerned with self-control. Despite impressive findings, Hay concludes self-control theory receives some measure of empirical support, but does not appear to be the definitive explanation of crime and deviance that the theory seeks to provide (728). Arnekleve et al. cite the importance of clarifying the role of attraction to risk in the definition of low self-control by asking the question, “Is risk-seeking better viewed as a component or as a consequence of low self-control?”

The 1998 Gibbs, Giever and Martin analysis generally supports the theory, but suggests the usefulness of a measure of self-control that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Results reported by Burton, Jr. and Cullen, et al. (1998), are largely consistent with the general theory with one exception. They suggest that research on the self-control perspective, for the most part, ignores gender differences. They posit the next step in research for researchers is to assess empirically how the
general theory accounts for gender-related aspects of crime in comparison to gender-specific theories of crime.

In Arneklev et al.'s (1999) review, Piquero and Rosay (1998) and Longshore et al. (1996), offer another example of mixed results when discussing the testing of the dimensionality of Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory. While Longshore et al.'s (1996, 1998) group is in agreement with Gottfredson and Hirschi that their theory is multidimensional, Piquero and Rosay (1998) argue that the results of their second-order factor analysis suggest that low self-control, the main component of the General Theory is a unidimensional characteristic.

To date, the formidable critiques of Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory are threefold. Ronald Akers (1991) argues against the general theory as being theoretically tautological because it only outlines one's propensity to commit crime by the lack of self-control. "They are one and the same, and such assertions about them are true by definition. The assertion means that low self-control causes low self-control. Similarly, since no operational definition of self-control is given, we cannot know that a person has low self-control, the stable propensity to commit crime, unless he or she commits crimes or analogous acts (243)." Along similar lines, Arneklev et al. (1993), suggests, "... a penchant for risk is a consequence of, rather than constitutive of, low self-control (52)."

Sampson and Laub (1993) view the stability of the low-self control aspect of the general theory as problematic in their drive to unravel the age invariance of delinquency and crime over the full life course. Although Sampson and Laub's
version of social control theory, when applied to the Gluecks’ 1968 data\(^1\), present a probabilistic link between weak social bonds (family, school), adolescent delinquency and adult crime and deviance, they also find that “salient life events and socialization experiences in adulthood can counteract, at least to some extent, the influence of early life experiences (246).”

Gottfredson and Hirschi have consistently argued that the early life experiences of inadequate childrearing foster a latent, stable trait that does not allow for behavioral change over time. It is not a propensity to commit crime; it is a condition that inhibits individuals from considering the consequences to their actions for others or the longer-term consequences for themselves when faced with the opportunity to commit a crime. Although not always in accord with the notion of such a static condition, prior research indicates inefficient parenting processes during adolescence influence the likelihood of delinquency and/or adult criminal behavior later in life (Hay 2003; Kobus 2003; Brannigan 2002; Sandeau-Becker 2002; Simons 2002).

Comments on the Existing Literature

There are two noteworthy observations regarding the existing literature. First, although Gibbs and Giever (1998) found the effect of parental management on the behavior of 239 liberal studies undergraduates to be statistically significant on self-

control, none of the empirical studies extend the general theory to measure the effect of parental childrearing characteristics on the misbehavior of adjudicated young people whose lack of self-control (criminality) is at the crux of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory.

Second, despite Gottfredson and Hirschi’s contention that discipline, monitoring, and affection tend to be missing in the homes of delinquents (97), none of the studies link recidivism to the family conditions necessary to produce a well-socialized individual. Therefore, the major burden of this study is to extend Gottfredson and Hirschi’s prediction that effective parenting, that is, childrearing practices, affects recidivism outcomes in this sample of adolescent males officially classified as delinquent.

Assumption

Because Gottfredson and Hirschi’s definition of low self-control is synonymous with their definition of delinquency (137), I make the assumption that the childrearing characteristics brought forth by their general theory are also effective predictors of continued delinquency once a youth has been arrested, put on trial, sentenced, and subsequently released from custody. My assumption is consistent with recent literature (Preski, 2001; Polakowski 1994; Sampson and Laub 1993; Horner 1991; Braithwaite 1989; Rosen 1985), that the foundation of all future behavior in adolescence can be based upon ongoing parental socialization processes throughout formative years. For example, Preski, and Polakowski’s argument when examining these issues shows that one of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s criteria, parental
monitoring between the ages of eight and ten, was statistically significant in predicting levels of self-control and its link to behavior at ages twelve to fourteen, which in turn, predicted delinquency during later adolescence. Leaving the issue of self-control for a future study, I accept the validity of the aforementioned arguments.

Thus, I do not explore decision-making processes such as self-control. Instead, I explore the effect of ongoing parental childrearing behavior on the recidivism rates of adjudicated youthful offenders once they are released from incarceration (boot camp). To accomplish this task I use familial characteristics and the recalled experiences described by study subjects, as well as official juvenile records, to examine bivariate associations within Gottfredson and Hirschi's theoretical framework. Hypotheses one through four are tests of my extension of the general theory.

**Hypotheses**

In summary, my thesis model (figure 1) presents these four hypotheses:

- **H1** The greater likelihood of being raised in a two-parent household, the less likely the recidivism.
- **H2** The greater the parental monitoring, the less likely the recidivism.
- **H3** The greater the likelihood parents recognize deviant behavior, the less likely the recidivism.
- **H4** The greater the likelihood parents use reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool following subjects' civil punishment, the less likely the recidivism.

---

2 Throughout this presentation the words parent, mother, and father are used synonymously with the term primary caretaker.
THESIS MODEL

PARENTAL (Caretaker) SUPERVISION-MONITORING
Primary Caretaker works outside home
Caretaker knows Whereabouts

RECOGNITION OF DEVIANT ACTS
Family criminality
Live w/criminal family member

PUNISHMENT OF DEVIANT ACTS
Lack of Post-camp caring and Reintegrative Shaming

RECIDIVISM
Arrested within 1 year of release from boot camp

Figure 1
DATA AND METHOD

Background Information of Sample

The data in this study come from various components of the National Institute of Justice Boot Camp Evaluation (Zhang, 2000). The research subjects are two groups of 100 male juveniles incarcerated during 1995 and 1996 in either one of two probation department forestry camps adjacent to each other and located 60 miles north of a large, Southern California metropolitan area. Study participants hold sustained petitions (convictions) by the juvenile courts for violent, non-violent and non-sex offenses. Each group shares a common delinquency trait; all 200 are documented or self-reported drug users, a high-risk behavior. Although there is no variability on this trait, it remains an important component because drug and/or alcohol use in juveniles shares features that satisfy the tendencies of criminality outlined by Gottfredson and Hirschi as an additional measure of delinquency (41).

The Zhang sample focused on three major ethnic groups, namely, Hispanic (66%), African-American (21.5%), and White (12.5%). For pragmatic reasons, other ethnic minorities were excluded from sampling. Due to a restructuring (e.g., regionalization) effort in the camp system, which affected the sampling period, about 70% of the daily population at the two camps are Hispanic. This also drew slightly more Caucasians but far fewer African-Americans than the rest of the camp system.

Official Data

The official data collection instrumentation contains four general sections: (1) demographic information (e.g., age, race), (2) current offenses and disposition type,
(3) prior arrest records, and (4) post-camp performance (recidivism information).

Official sources for data include the Juvenile Automated Index (JAI) maintained by the Probation Department and the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS) maintained by the state Bureau of Criminal Statistics. After positive identification of the selected juveniles (through a combination of cross-referencing arrest records and matching vital demographic variables) in the automated system, computer records were printed and then manually coded into the data form.

Self-Report Data

Additionally, telephone interviews were conducted using the well-established International Self-Report of Delinquency (ISRD) questionnaire to provide data for the self-report component. This instrument, originally put together by criminologists from 15 Western countries, went through a series of empirical examinations and was found to be reliable and methodologically sound (for a detailed discussion of this instrument, see Junger-Tas et al., 1994 and Zhang et al., 2000). In addition, the ISRD was previously piloted on a sample of detained juvenile offenders in the Los Angeles County Probation Department, which supported its validity and applicability (see Junger-Tas et al., 1992).

The instrument contains several measures of attitudinal and behavioral responses consistent with Gottfredson and Hirschi’s key family characteristics outlined as potential impediments to adequate, ongoing child rearing practices. In addition, it contains attitudes about high-risk or delinquent activities, participation in
high-risk or delinquent behaviors prior to and after boot camp, and familial shaming practices.

Profiles of Study Participants

The fact that the juveniles in this study are all cast as officially delinquent is unmistakable. But who are they and what types of education and background experience do they share prior to entering and exiting boot camp? The following two tables present an overview of participant characteristics.

Table 1 contains demographic profiles for study participants. All those included in this study are adolescent males (ages 13 to 19) with a mean age of seventeen years at the time they exited boot camp. For the most part the profiles are similar. However, there are few noteworthy differences. First, the racial-ethnic composition is predominately Hispanic, followed by African-American, then White. Second, while the majority indicates they are currently enrolled in either high school or college, slightly more than 23% indicate they do not attend school at all.

There are three important similarities within this group of subjects. First, the majority has had four or more arrests prior to and including the offense that brought them to boot camp. Second, all subjects were released to their primary caretakers. Third, all were placed on probation for various lengths of time once they were released from camp.
Table 1. Demographic Profile of Study Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th># of Subjects</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Currently in School</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS Diploma/G.E.D</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending College</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not in School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at First Arrest</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>7.09 to 17.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>14.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at Camp Exit</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>13.74 to 19.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Caretaker</td>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently Live w/Primary Caretaker</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures**

Table 2 describes the variables used in this study. The dependent variable, recidivism, is drawn from the official Records of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP sheets) and measures whether or not subjects were arrested within one year of camp exit. This variable is dichotomized and is represented by: 0=No arrests within one year; and, 1=Arrested within one year.
Each of my hypotheses is tested with at least one variable. Each variable is
categorical and is dichotomized. The variable for H1, which is, the greater likelihood
of being raised in a two-parent household, the less likely the recidivism, describes the
person(s) who is most responsible for childrearing. The response choices are, both
parents and single parent. Originally, “primary caretaker” was an open-ended
question which asked subjects who in their family was most responsible for
childrearing. Some of the responses were, both parents, mother, father, grandfather,
grandmother, and group home. Since the first hypothesis predicts that youths living
in homes with both parents are less likely to recidivate, the category for both parents
was untouched. All the other aforementioned response categories were grouped into
the category called single parent.

H2 which is, the greater the parental monitoring, the less likely the recidivism,
has two variables. In the original dataset, the first variable, “Does primary caretaker
work outside the home,” was a closed-ended question and had only two response
choices. The response choices remain, yes, and no. The second variable, “Caretaker
knows subject’s whereabouts” was also closed-ended and dichotomous in the original
dataset. For my study, the response choices remain as, yes, and no.

H3, which is, the greater the likelihood parents recognize deviant behavior, the
less likely the recidivism, has two variables. Each variable describes an element of
family criminality. The original dataset response choices for first variable, “Has
anyone in your family ever spent time in jail or prison?” were, yes, and no. This
variable did not require recoding for my study. The response choices for the second
variable, "Did you ever live with the criminal family member?" also remain the same as in the original dataset. The response choices are, yes, and no.

H₄, which is, the greater the likelihood parents use reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool following the subjects’ civil punishment, the less likely the recidivism, has three variables. All three variables were originally Likert scale measurements. My research question examines only that parents care, and that they use reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool. Thus, the scales for these last three variables were collapsed into two categories each so that “never” became “no” and the other response choices, “sometimes, often, and almost always” became “yes.” Therefore, the caring variable, “While you were in camp, did your parent(s) tell you they still cared about you?” is now dichotomous. The response choices are, yes, and no. The maternal shaming variable, “After arrest and camp, how often did your mother tell you [that] you were still a good person?” is also dichotomous with responses limited to yes, and no. The third variable is similar to the previous one except that it refers to the father (or father figure). The response choices are also as limited as the previous variable, yes, and no.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-camp arrest</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No post-camp arrest</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Caretaker – Both parents</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Caretaker has a job</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Caretaker Knows Whereabouts</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Criminality</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live w/Criminal Family Member</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-camp Parental Caring</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Shaming</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal Shaming</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 Prior Arrests</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more prior arrests</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of Prior Arrests</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Number of Prior Arrests</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

For the analysis I examine the zero-order correlations between several measures of parental involvement and my dependent variable, recidivism. I chose the zero-order correlation approach because the simplicity of dichotomous variables provides a straightforward estimate of how the distribution of the dependent variable changes across the independent variables.

I begin my analysis first by looking at the strength of the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable, recidivism. Then, when there is statistical significance I examine any association changes when the control variable, number of prior arrests, is introduced. Tables illustrating the influence of
the control variable will be displayed only when the original analysis is substantially altered.

Limitations

There are three limitations to this study. First, in consideration of the small sample size (200 cases), the alpha level is raised to .10; therefore, results must be interpreted with more caution than when the alpha level is set at .05. Second, attempts were made to use more sophisticated analyses such as ordered logistic regression and ordinary least squares regression, but cell distributions yielded too few cases to render any meaningful interpretation. Third, because the majority of subjects (65.5%) live in households where the biological father is not present, the paternal reintegrative shaming questions ask subjects to extend the term “father” to include a father figure if they have little or no contact with their biological father.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: The greater likelihood of being raised in a two-parent household, the less likely the recidivism.

Table 3 presents the association of recidivism and living in a dual-parent household. The lower percentage of recidivism is among the group that is raised in a dual-parent household. In other words, having two parents in the household is negatively associated with being arrested within one year of release from boot camp. This likely reflects the involvement of both parents in supervision and monitoring.
The strength of the association is statistically significant. The pattern persists with the introduction of the control variable, number of prior arrests. Given these results, $H_1$ is supported. As predicted, subjects raised in a home with two parents were less likely to be arrested within one year of leaving boot camp.

**Table 3. Recidivism by Primary Caretaker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>Both Parents</th>
<th>Single Caretaker</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.9%*</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$*\phi = .103; p = .072$

*correlation is significant at the .10 level

**Hypothesis 2: The greater the parental monitoring, the less likely the recidivism.**

I measure parental monitoring with two variables; “primary caretaker works outside the home” and “parent(s) knows subjects’ whereabouts when he leaves the house”. Responses are dichotomous for both questions.

Table 4 describes the association of recidivism and having a caretaker who works outside the home. The general theory posits that recidivism ought to increase because the monitoring of behavior is compromised when the mother, or other primary caretaker is at work at the time the adolescent is at home. However, having a primary caretaker who works is negatively associated with being arrested within one year of boot camp release. The lower percentage of recidivism is with the subjects
who have a primary caretaker working away from home. This finding is statistically significant and persists with the introduction of the control variable. Because recidivism was shown to decrease for subjects with a working caretaker, the support for H2 and the notion that working away from home increases recidivism, is not evident.

**Table 4. Recidivism by Primary Caretaker Works Outside the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>42.3%*</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*φ = -.108; p = .063 100.0% 100.0% 100.0%

*correlation is significant at the .10 level

Table 5 describes the association between recidivism and whether parent(s) know subjects' whereabouts when they [subjects] go out. There is no statistical support that recidivism is reduced when parent(s) know subjects' whereabouts.

**Table 5. Recidivism by Caretaker Knows Subjects' Whereabouts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*φ = .042; p = .276 100.0% 100.0% 100.0%
Hypothesis 3: The greater the likelihood parents recognize deviant behavior, the less likely the recidivism.

I measure parental recognition of misbehavior with two variables: "family criminality" and "subjects live(d) in same household with criminal family member." Responses are dichotomous for both questions.

Table 6 describes the association between recidivism and if anyone in subjects' families spent time in jail or prison. According to the general theory, recognition of deviant behavior is less likely when family members are criminally involved. As seem in Table 6, the higher percentage of recidivism is found among subjects that have at least one family member who has spent time in jail or prison. The association is statistically significant and the pattern persists after the introduction of the control variables.

Table 6. Recidivism by Family Criminality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>50.4%*</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ϕ = .102; p = .076</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*correlation is significant at the .10 level

Table 7 describes the association between recidivism and subjects living in same household with criminal family member. The theory posits that recognition of misbehavior is less likely when subjects live in a household where parents or other family members have been arrested. This analysis finds no statistical support the
notion that recidivism increases when living with someone in the family who has committed crime.

**Table 7. Recidivism by Lived in Same Household as Criminal Family Member**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φ = .055; p = .221</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6 and 7, the evidence for H₃ is mixed. Although there is statistical support for an increase in recidivism when one or more family members have spent time in jail or prison, there is evidence that recidivism increases when living with someone in the family who has committed crime.

**Hypothesis 4:** *The greater the likelihood parents use reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool following civil punishment, the less likely the recidivism.*

In this section there is a subset of three variables the *general theory* posits as essential to effective childrearing and to reducing recidivism. The first links parental caring with concept of parental attachment to the child. According to the theory, attachment is a necessary condition for the ongoing investments in the youth’s well being. The second variable describes whether the mother uses post-camp reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool to prevent recidivism. The third variable describes whether the father (or father figure) uses post-camp reintegrative shaming as a parenting tool.
How do these three variables investigate the notion of punishment for deviant behavior? Despite how a court-ordered stay in a juvenile boot camp is viewed by some, not as punishment but as a programmed intervention, this study views boot camp incarceration as a direct punishment for deviant behavior. Instead of looking at parental methods of punishing misbehavior, I explore the in-camp, and post-camp attitudes and behaviors of parents and how they [parents] respond to subjects’ incarceration experience. For it is then that Braithwaite’s reintegrative shaming techniques can be viewed as a method or tool for reducing recidivism.

Table 8 describes the association of recidivism and parental caring. The response choices were originally measured using a Likert scale. This variable is now dichotomous and collapsed as simply yes and no. This measure yielded no statistical support for the notion that parental caring influences a reduction in recidivism.

Table 8. Recidivism by Parental Caring for Subject While In Boot camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ϕ = .018; p = .398</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 describes the association of recidivism and maternal reintegrative shaming. This measure was in response to the question, “After arrest and camp how often did your mother tell you that you were still a good person?” The response choices were originally measured using a four-point Likert scale as described in the
introduction to Table 2. As mentioned in that introduction, I collapsed this variable into two response choices. Consequently, this measure of shaming may not adequately capture parental shaming and therefore yielded no statistical support for the notion that recidivism is decreased when mothers use the parenting tool of reintegrative shaming when subjects return home from boot camp.

Table 9. **Recidivism by Maternal Reintegrative Shaming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ϕ = -0.067; p = .173

Table 10 describes the association of recidivism and paternal reintegrative shaming. “After arrest and camp how often did your father (or father figure) tell you that you were still a good person?” Just as was discussed in Table 9, the response choices were originally measured using a four-point Likert scale. This variable is now collapsed with “never” recoded as “no” with the remaining response categories recoded as “yes”. The measure yielded no statistical support for the notion that recidivism is decreased when fathers use post-camp reintegrative shaming.
Table 10. Recidivism by Paternal Reintegrative Shaming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrest 1 yr post-camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φ = -.025; p = .363</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The measures used to test H₃ are straightforward in their intent to predict whether intra-camp caring and post-camp reintegrative shaming affect recidivism outcomes. The evidence presented in Tables 8 through 10 lends no statistical support for the idea that recidivism is reduced when caretakers use these parenting tools.
CONCLUSION

A number of questions were addressed by this extension of Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory intended to make sense of ways in which parental involvement might affect the recidivism of youthful offenders. Overall, the findings are mixed.

The first hypothesis, the greater likelihood of being raised in a two-parent home, the less likely the recidivism, is statistically supported. Subjects raised in a dual-parent household are less likely to recidivate.

However, the finding for the second hypothesis, the greater likelihood parents recognize deviant behavior, the less likely the recidivism, is mixed. Despite the general theory's prediction that parental supervision and monitoring are potentially compromised with a working primary caretaker, the lower percentage of recidivism is with subjects whose primary caretaker does work away from home. Furthermore, this finding is statistically significant and the zero-order relationship remains unchanged when the control variable, number of prior arrests, is introduced. I can only speculate that perhaps a neighbor or relative monitors the subjects’ activities while the working parent is away. Whatever the reason, the results on this variable may indicate that supervision and monitoring can still be effective even though the primary caretaker works outside the home. Interestingly, there is no statistical support for a decrease in recidivism when the parent(s) know the whereabouts of subjects when they are away from the house. Again, the findings are mixed for the second hypothesis.

The third hypothesis, that parental recognition of misbehavior lowers recidivism also has mixed support. Recidivism is increased when someone in the
family has a criminal background. However, when subjects live in the same
household with someone who has spent time in jail or prison, the recidivism rate is
unaffected.

As for the fourth hypothesis, the greater likelihood parents use reintegrative
shaming as a parenting tool following subjects returning home from boot camp, I
expected to find statistical support for the notion that caring parents and reintegrative
shaming would reduce recidivism. Nevertheless, there is no significant difference in
recidivism for offenders whose parents demonstrated in-camp caring, nor is there
statistical support that post-camp reintegrative shaming by either parent affected
recidivism rates at all.

None of the above is meant to imply that further research would yield similar
findings; quite the contrary. It is possible, in general, that the particular items chosen
from the self-reported questionnaire, or my measurement of them, may fail to capture
recidivism differences because of the small sample size. It is also possible that my
measurements, although reasonable, may make little difference in the zero-order
correlations because subjects’ own internal dynamics\(^3\) overwhelmed any post-camp
parenting styles. In any event, extending Gottfredson and Hirschi’s *general theory* to
juvenile offenders is a worthwhile endeavor and provokes additional inquiry. In
addition, further research would likely benefit from a much larger sample size.

\(^3\) By subjects’ own internal dynamics I mean that perhaps they simply became sick-and-tired of being
arrested, or they might possibly have had a religious experience and decided to make a substantive
change in their behavior.
COMMENTS

Do these results mean that this group of subjects and others like them will forever experience the pernicious effects of recidivism? If we are to accept Gottfredson and Hirschi’s view that criminality is an embedded characteristic resulting from the lack of parental guidance earlier in the lives of these individuals then yes, they will continue to commit crime when the opportunity to do so exists. And, as a result, no matter what the intervention or punishment, these offenders will enter and exit various prison turnstiles throughout their lives.

But how does the general theory account for the group of non-recidivates? Gottfredson and Hirschi would argue that either the opportunity to commit a crime had not yet presented itself, or that the culprits had simply not yet been caught within the one-year study timeline. Certainly, family dynamics are an important building block in the development of prosocial behavior, but the results of this study raise questions that invite more inquiry into other social and intrapersonal dynamics that might have influenced post-camp recidivism.

Perhaps one approach might be the micro-social perspective borrowed from economics. That is, the idea of rational choice detailed by Piliavin, et al (1986), Becker (1968), and Friedman and Savage (1948). From this point of view the expected gains from committing an illegal act are greater than the expected alternatives attached to engaging in legal behavior. For example, it is widely accepted that adolescence is a time when out-of-the-ordinary behaviors are explored. Perhaps the “bad boy” image rewards the youth with a sense of power over
schoolmates or other peers. In any event, rational choice is a perspective that might explain anti-social behavior.

Another approach is the concept of differential association. That is, the influence of a peer-group on delinquency that has been discussed in recent decades by Matsueda and Anderson 1998; Voss 1964; and, Short 1957. It is argued that the choice of one’s peers has some bearing on crime as a social phenomenon. Although this approach is generally applied to the study of career criminals, perhaps it could be applied to the subjects in my study, many of whom may exist in an environment where peer choice is not optional. For example, living in a neighborhood where street-gang lifestyles are considered the norm may debilitate the impact of efficient parenting.

A third perspective that might be explored is anomie, a more macro-social condition conceived by Durkheim [1897] that is described as a lack of order within social institutions, such as the family, whereby the rules of conduct are blurred. From this point of view subjects might be living in households where chaos reigns. Family size, according to Gottfredson and Hirschi, is one of the contributing factors to delinquency. If there are a lot of adults in the home, sometimes misbehavior gets overlooked because everyone in the household has their own concept of what constitutes misbehavior.

Although all of the viewpoints I’ve discussed might be interesting to explore, the most fruitful approach, in my view, for distinguishing the non-recidivates from the recidivates is Sampson and Laub’s life-course perspective (1993:7). Unlike
Gottfredson and Hirschi's *general theory*, the life-course perspective suggests that the interaction with other institutions of informal social control outside the family, such as schools, the workplace, or the military, influence recidivism outcomes. The life-course perspective would likely also suggest that a significant life event such as the introduction of a mentor, or “finding God”, might have a positive influence on the behavior of non-recidivates. Events such as these would more than likely attenuate the effects of inadequate childrearing practices. Likewise, the lack of such social support or attitudinal change might have a negative influence on the behavior of recidivates, thereby strengthening the negative affects of environment or inadequate childrearing practices.

All of this discussion suggests that Gottfredson and Hirschi’s *general theory* continues to invite further inquiry. Whether that inquiry is placed in direct competition with other theoretical models, or whether inquiries such as mine explore ways to extend the *general theory*, the prospects are boundless and depend entirely upon the resourcefulness of the researcher. Thus, this study is the first step in an effort to broaden our understanding of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory of crime and how parenting characteristics might impact juvenile recidivism.
References


Impulse Control – Weiner

2. I’m the kind of person who will try anything once.
3. I should try harder to control myself when I’m having fun.
8. I do things without giving them enough thought.
12. I become “wild and crazy” and do things other people might not like.
15. When I’m doing something for fun, (for example partying, acting silly), I tend to get carried away and go too far.
18. I like to do new and different things that many people would consider weird or not really safe.
24. I say the first thing that comes into my mind without thinking enough about it.
27. I stop and think things through before I act.

alpha – .66 – .69