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Journal of Knowledge and Best Practices in Juvenile Justice and Psychology

The Applicability of Agnew's General Theory of Crime and Delinquency to Recent Juvenile Gang Membership in Houston

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Abstract

This qualitative descriptive study used Agnew's general strain theory of crime and delinquency as lens through which to interpret the recent developments of juvenile gangs and gang-related activities in Houston, Texas. Agnew strain theory's main prepositions describe: 1) an inability to achieve goals that are valued positively, 2) an absence of positive goals, and 3) a presence of negativity or crime. These were assessed in terms of applicability to joining gangs in Houston. Data were collected by unstructured interviews of city employees who respond to Houston's gangs (e.g., Mayor' Anti-Gang Office staff and Houston Police Department officers), area observations, and a review of city and police documents regarding gang activity in Houston. There appeared to be support for Agnew's assertion that strain precedes much juvenile delinquency.

Misconceptions and outdated information shape much of people's perception of juvenile gangs. Rightly, juvenile gangs remain a significant concern as gang members are more delinquent than non-gang members. The United States experienced tremendous growth in juvenile gangs in the 1980s and 1990s as the number of gang members in cities and jurisdictions with gang-related problems increased from 286 to about 4,800 (National Youth Gang Center, 1999). More recent gang developments are unclear and largely limited to media stories. This qualitative study is an attempt at updating the knowledge on juvenile gangs, specifically, in the United States' fourth largest city, Houston, Texas.

Gang activity appears to be increasing. The National Gang Threat Assessment (NGTA) (2009) indicated that in 2005 there were 790,000 gang members with 26,000 gangs. By 2009, gang members had increased to 900,000. The report also stated that gangs were responsible for a great number of crimes committed in many urban and suburban communities across the United States. Gang members engage in different activities such as theft, assault, alien smuggling, burglary, drive-by shootings, extortion, firearm offenses, home invasion robberies, homicide, identity theft, weapons trafficking, to name a few. Additionally, the NGTA (2009) revealed that in 2004 45% of US gangs were involved in drug distribution, but in 2008 the survey revealed that 58% were involved. Some of the most concerning crimes for police remain gang-related homicides.

The National Youth Gang Survey by the National Youth Gang Center (2001) revealed that there were 1,423 gang-related homicides in 639 law enforcement jurisdictions. The problem appeared to be heavily concentrated in the largest cities and increasing, according to numerous media reports from 2007 to 2009, especially, in Texas cities with a large Hispanic population such as Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, El Paso and Laredo. In some of these cases, juvenile gang members or teenage death squads (Laredo, Texas - Mexican drug cartels using teenage death squads in America, 2009) were believed to be the perpetrators. Therefore, these compounding factors emphasize the significance of exploring the issue of gangs.

Juvenile gang members are individuals who are under the age of 18 or individuals who are below the age limit set by their state as the legal age of majority. They also identify themselves as gang members and have engaged in criminal activities as a result of their gang affiliation. The Texas Penal Code § 71.01 (2009) has defined the term gang as three or more people engaged in criminal activity.

An impediment in comprehending the development of gangs is the direct and, or indirect impact of poverty as opposed to various stressors of youth. Agnew's (1992) general strain theory of crime and delinquency expanded the notion of strain by assessing crime and delinquency as substitutes for the different strains encountered by youths. Agnew explained that the desire to commit deviant acts stemmed from three primary factors, which were the inability to achieve goals that were valued positively, the absence of positive goals, and the presence of negativity or crime. These strain elements are directly applicable to gangs as the reasons youths become affiliated with gangs as gang proliferation can be linked to stress and a lack of positive opportunities. Thus, this study examined recent developments in juvenile gang membership in Houston as possibly attributable to strain as described by Agnew.

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The research questions are: 1) How problematic is the juvenile gang situation in Houston? a) Is it increasing? b) Are the gangs violent? c) How widespread are they? d) How do they affect communities? e) Are female gang members more likely to be auxiliaries of male gangs or more independent? 2) How applicable is Agnew's general strain theory of crime and delinquency to the recent developments of juvenile gangs in Houston? a) Does Agnew's explanation account for the types of youths (individuals) who join gangs (e.g., working, middle or upper class youths, racially and ethnically)? b) Does Agnew's description of strain adequately explain the disproportionate number of minorities and males who join gangs?

At the height of the crack epidemic in the 1980s to early 1990s there was a concerted effort by older gang members in areas, such as Chicago, to recruit young (e.g., 10-year-olds) impressionable members into their gangs. This was out of a desire to maximize illicit drug profits while escaping their state's harsh drug penalties for adult offenders. Thus, the adults used juveniles to distribute drugs after offering them familial affection, a gun, and a message that as juveniles *nothing* would happen to them. The poor judgment of these rather young gang members was likely a significant element in the irrationality of much of the gang-related homicides of that era. After major law enforcement efforts, the violence subsided significantly; granted law enforcement activity was likely not the only element behind the decline. Nevertheless, in specific cities such as Houston, the local media have reported that an upswing in gang violence is new cause for concern.

Gangs in Texas are adopting a more multi-national ethnic membership and as such, it is inaccurate to ascribe criminal activities to any specific race or ethnicity. However, some gangs that are ethnic-based appear to have specific criminal tendencies. The 1995 national gang survey reported that Texas had the second largest number of gangs at 3,276 (Shelden, Tracy, & Brown, 2004) behind California. In Texas, juvenile gang members are individuals age 17 and under, but there is a tendency for older individuals to be included in gangs with juvenile members. There are various categories of gangs. Some of these gangs include the delinquent youth gang, traditional turf-based gang, gain-oriented gang, violent or hate gang, tagging (graffiti) crews, and female gangs, to name a few (Abbott, 2001). Many of these gangs may overlap. The delinquent juvenile gangs generally consist primarily of juveniles who socialize. Members of these gangs are usually not involved in serious criminal activities such as assault or robbery nor have they been known to garner much attention from law enforcement.

The traditional turf-based gang is usually loosely structured and committed to defending the name and status of the gang. This group may include both juveniles and young adults who are associated with a geographic territory. Identifying symbols such as clothing styles, colors, hand signs and tattoos are typically used along with the usage of graffiti to mark the gang's turf. According to Abbott's (2001) report of gangs in Texas, "at least one shooting (assault, homicide, or drive-by) has occurred in the previous year as a result of rivalry between this gang and another" (p. 48).

The gain-oriented gang is also loosely structured and consists of both juveniles and young adults. Gain-oriented gangs are involved in criminal activities for economic reasons. Some of the activities included robbery, burglary and, or the sale of controlled substances. These groups may share the characteristics of turf-based gangs and may even defend territory, however, when they act together as a gang it is for economic gains. Additionally, some members of the gang have set-up criminal operations in new areas to avoid pressure from law enforcement authorities.

Violent (hate) gangs may include juveniles and adults, or may be exclusive with either. This gang usually has an identifying style of dress, haircut, and tattoos (Abbott, 2001). Examples of some offenses committed by the members of these gangs are vandalism, assault, and, or homicide. The violence from these members usually has an ideological or religious rationale, which may include racism or Satanism. Another feature of this gang is the presence of random acts of violence and sometimes senseless violence.

The tagging crews and tagbangers (groups of individual taggers which evolve into gangs) are similar in some regards, such as their involvement in the vandalism of property. Members are motivated by the desire for attention and the use of graffiti as identification for themselves and the gang. The creation of graffiti by the taggers is considered a work of art. However, tagbangers who have had competition from the tagging crews and other street gangs have increased and expanded the range of their criminal activities. As a result, the tagbangers sometimes engaged in criminal behaviors beyond tagging (Abbott, 2001).

Gangs in Houston

Many of the common characteristics and patterns of gang activity in the United States are represented in Houston gang activity. Gangs could be found in most parts of Houston. Gang statistics, beginning in 1988, indicated that there was a steady increase in the total number of gangs in Houston. For example, in 1988, there were 23 reported gangs, in 1989, there were 63 and by 1991, there were 103 gangs reported (Bozeman, Mitchell, & Fougerousse, 1991). The total number of gang membership also increased. In 1989, gang membership stood at 333, but increased tremendously to 1,098, a 230% increase in 1991 (Bozeman et al., 1991). The Houston Police Department's Gang Division respondents in this study reported that in late November 2007, they were aware of 363 juvenile gang members, which is an increase from previous years.

Anderson and Diaz (1996) stated that juvenile gangs appear to be an increasing presence which has

caused the public to become more fearful. The authors also explained that juvenile offenses especially gang-related are some of the "most brutal recent homicides in Houston, a double-rape-murder of two teenage girls, was linked to juvenile gang initiation rites" (Liebrum, 1994, p. A12). In 2005, a Houston local news report stated that gang violence was increasing; the Southwest Freeway, Hillcroft and Bissonnet areas were described as the most volatile areas for gang activities such as drug dealing, robberies and assault (Marshall, 2005). An independent daily newspaper staff writer for The Christian Science Monitor, Axtman, wrote in a 2005 an article revealing that MS-13, a Central American gang was spreading rapidly in the city after the accidental killing of a toddler.

Based on the gang activities in Houston there is some indication that members of the gangs are juvenile, immature, loosely organized and that trends of increasing violence and drug trafficking are for financial gains (Bozeman et al., 1991). The Houston Police Department has classified gangs into four major categories, which include criminal street gangs, identity gangs, racist gangs and satanic gangs. Law enforcement has described the criminal street gangs as dangerous and hardcore because of their penchant for engaging in criminality and violence. Identity gangs tend to be social groups and not very threatening to social order. Racist gangs are generally aligned with specific ideology and hatred of minorities, while the satanic gangs mainly follow a ritual with no apparent criminal involvement.

In recent local news reports, an increase in gang-related problems has been attributed to New Orleans residents in Houston post hurricane Katrina in 2004 and Mexican gang activity. According to Glen's (2009) article written in the *Houston Chronicle* newspaper, New Orleans gang wars were beginning to impact Houston as the violence spilled into the city. In an earlier article, Bryant and Khanna (2006) reported that some Katrina evacuees were taking turf battles into Houston, which included activities such as homicides and robberies. Also, in 2006, the *Houston Chronicle* published an article, titled *The butterfly and the knife/what readers are saying*, which discussed high school youths who were from the gangs *Crazy Crew* and *MS* and their involvement in violent acts against each other. Turner (2008) reported an Alan Fox led study that Houston had the most homicides by Black youths, some of which were attributed to gangs.

The local news (CBS 11 News) on August 3, 2009 produced by Raziq warned about the warring gangs having Houston's *Gulfton Ghetto* in a stranglehold. According to this report, the Gulfton area has become a war zone as rival gangs struggle for territory and power. This area is also the headquarters for a gang known as the Southwest Cholos. The Houston police informed the local news that a Southwest Cholos gang member was shot several times in the parking lot-a young male, Carlos Rogue who was 17 years old. Further, witnesses claimed that the shooter was an MS-13 gang member who was later arrested. The local news also revealed that in recent times, MS-13 gang members have been seeking to take control of the Gulfton area as more members take up residency. Reverend Alejandro Montes from the San Mateo Iglesia Episcopal Church, who has witnessed the gang firsthand, stated that many of the youth in the Gulfton area see gangs and violence as simply a way of life. Also, Wendy Pineda, youth coordinator at San Mateo, concurred with that assessment by stating that being a part of the gang is like breathing; something with which youth just learn to live.

Agnew's General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency (1985, 1992, 1994)

During the 1970s and 1980s the United States experienced tremendous social and economic changes (Shelden et al., 2004; Wilson, 1987), amidst substantial political shifts. Increasing single-parent homes, crime, and the crack epidemic were significant tides in minority communities. These rapid changes have been theorized to produce strain for youth. Agnew's general strain theory is most applicable to this context given its broad application of strain beyond mere economics. Agnew's theory also addresses some of the limitations of previous strain theories. For example, he acknowledged that an increase in aspirations and a decrease in expectations do not mean that deviant behavior will automatically increase. Additionally, the manner in which youths respond to strain by engaging in delinquency may be dependent upon the magnitude of strain, the re-occurrence, duration and the negative events taking place. However, youths experience a great deal of strain when those dreams are challenged or become impossible. Essentially, Agnew's general strain theory addresses ways in which strain may be measured and what correlation may exist between crime and strain. In this study, how well Agnew's strain theory appears to fit the development of juvenile gangs in Houston was evaluated.

Inability to achieve goals that are valued positively. Agnew (1992) explained that strain may occur when there is a divide between aspirations and expectations. He continued that not only when future goals were jeopardized but when immediate goals were challenged that youths may experience strain. For example, based on the culture some youths have certain values such as status and respect which are especially important for males as a symbol of masculinity, and the inability to get those values may result in strain (Agnew, 1994).

The idea of the American dream causes strain for some individuals striving to achieve the dream, but who are unable to do so legitimately because of the lack of social and economic opportunities. The inability to achieve positive values gradually leads to despair and affects individual behavior, hopes and plans. Agnew (1992), and as cited in Akers and Sellers (2009), stated that strain is the end result of "the gap between expecta-

tions and actual achievements, which leads to anger, resentment and disappointment" (p. 199). Also, the manner in which individuals view what is just and the actual end results could lead youths to become more involved in criminal activities. Akers and Sellers explained this point by stating that youth would not view the events in their lives positively if they perceived that an investment of the same as others did not lead to equal rewards.

The absence of positive goals. Agnew (1992) explained the absence of positive goals by stating that the source of strain for an individual may lie in certain life experiences. For example, failure in school, death of a family member, or loved one, or relationship problems could all cause youths to develop negative feelings, which leads to strain. Agnew also stated that based on research it was found that the lack of, or absence of positive goals may result in strain.

The presence of negativity or crime. Agnew (1985) explained that the negative actions of others may affect individuals. In some cases, youths are unable to control the negativity or actions of others around them. Some examples of negativity or crime include exposure to child abuse, victimization, negative school experience, peer pressure and even community pressure (Agnew, 1985, 1992). In 1998, Hoffman and Miller stated that research on the strain theory revealed that negativity such as the loss of a loved one, parental problems such as unemployment often increased the chances of youths becoming delinquents. Akers and Sellers (2009) explained that youths, because of their age and laws in society, were not able to leave school or home freely without legal ramifications. So, crime and deviant behavior, which includes joining gangs, may become an enticing prospect so as to avoid the strain. In addition, responsibility becomes secondary rather than primary; hence, youths engage in deviant acts because strain is influenced by the conditions around them and the actions of others. Thus, youth may conform to gang activities in a context of anger, frustration, and loss of hope, which becomes close to being toxic as the strain becomes inevitable.

The strain theory seems applicable to recent juvenile gang development in Houston because strain is not predisposed to any specific race, class or gender. Similarly, gangs are not predisposed to any specific ethnicity, gender, or social class. It is, therefore, important to note that strain may be experienced by any individual in certain situations or environments. Strain, as put forth by Agnew, appears applicable as a theoretical explanation for juvenile gangs as many studies tend to target particular social groups and minorities rather than the strain that individuals undergo. Also, this theory has the potential to overcome the shortcomings of the previous strain theories given its breadth, which goes beyond mere economic strain.

Empirical tests of Agnew's General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency

Empirical findings on strain theory appear to be inconsistent, as evidence for its impact on crime or delinquency is not always clear. However, the general strain theory has its foundation in research in justice, stress, equity and regression as evident in some studies (Adams, 1963; Agnew, 1991; Folger, 1986; Pearlin, 1983). Given that autonomy is important to many juveniles, if their autonomy is hindered and goals are blocked then this may lead to delinquency. Anderson (1999) and Messerschmidt's (1993) empirical studies indicated that, especially for males, if there were perceived threats to masculinity these may influence deviance, including gang-related activities. There is also more evidence of some relationship between strain and delinquency, which may explain why some youths gravitate towards gangs (Agnew & White, 1992; Mazerolle & Maahs, 2000). Some researchers have indicated that individuals, who had experienced strain as described by Agnew within a context where the presence of negativity existed or there was an absence of positive goals, were more likely to join gangs (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978; Nofzinger & Kurtz, 2005).

Broidy and Agnew (1997) argued that discrepancies exist in subjective strains, such as emotional strain between males and females. This factor is crucial to this study because it may explain why juvenile gangs consist overwhelmingly of males. Additionally, in a follow-up version of his earlier explanation of the general strain theory, Agnew (2006) argued that empirical evidence indicated that individuals exposed to strain have a much greater tendency to engage in criminal activities. Figure 1 displays the expected pattern of how strain might lead a juvenile into gang life.

Figure 1: *How general strain theory may lead a juvenile to gang life*
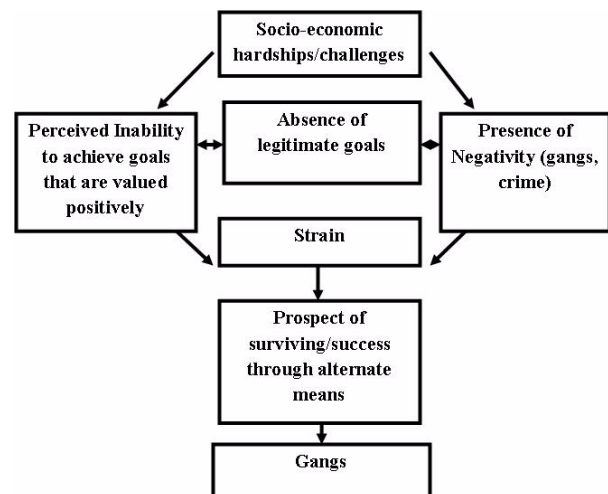
Method

Research Design

This was a descriptive qualitative effort to assess how well the tenets of Agnew's general strain theory might be said to fit recent developments of juvenile gangs and juvenile gang membership in Houston, Texas. A qualitative descriptive study was chosen because of the potential for integrating ideas and demonstrating outcomes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The approach allowed the researcher to effectively organize and demonstrate a sequence of ideas that may lead to certain outcomes by new discovery or integration of some ideas.

Data collection was by unstructured interviews and document analysis. The unstructured interviews were largely conversational, a process whereby one of the researchers had talks with individuals who had knowledge of gangs in Houston. Unstructured interviews were done in comfortable settings as that researcher attempted to access available information about the topic of interest. During these interviews, the researcher was able to listen for key terms such as drive-bys, drug bust, killings, robberies, et cetera, committed by juveniles. The document analysis was of newspaper articles on gangs from the *Houston Chronicle* from 2006 to 2009. The analysis of news items allowed the researcher to observe patterns in media reports of juvenile gang-related activities in the area of interest during the period of interest. In media reports and newspapers, the researcher looked specifically for juvenile gang activities such as killings, robberies, drive-bys, and age of the youths, race, and the place where incidents occurred in recent years.

Data Collection

The data collection took place over approximately four weeks. The qualitative data collection was extensive and included an examination of secondary sources such as the National Youth Gang Survey, National Gang Threat Assessment, previous studies, local news, local newspaper and then, unstructured interviews. The use of interviews of knowledgeable individuals was critically important to this effort. The interviews queried the constitution of gangs, gang member demographics, gender roles, level of violence, reasons for joining a gang and intervention efforts. Interviews were done with care to minimize researcher bias. The first author who conducted the interviews kept a journal to monitor herself as the data collection instrument while in the field.

The interviews also assisted in the identification of gangs, *hotspots*, socio-economic factors, trends, race, and national and ethnic background of many gangs in the city.

At least five persons from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Task Force Office and from Houston Police Department were interviewed. These persons were also asked to make reports, statistics, photographs, et cetera available for examination. Specifically, unstructured interviews were conducted with a senior officer from the Houston Police Department, and two others from Fondren Division Gang Unit and, former, potential and actual gang members in southwest Houston. Also interviewed were a director at the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office in Houston, and a staff member from the Mayors Anti-Gang Office. A gang expert from the police department also assisted the researcher in identifying gang communities and gang graffiti therein. These interviews on juvenile gangs were limited to the city of Houston. From the interviews some important questions, in regard to gangs, affirmed and refuted some of the recent literature on gang activities. Beyond this, all *Houston Chronicle* newspaper reports on gangs from 2006 to 2009 were analyzed to identify gang trends as described by the media.

Analysis

The data analysis began with initial data collection and continued through the write-up of results. The initial stages of write-ups included text from the unstructured interviews, newspapers and other relevant reports. The data were assessed initially by reading and re-reading to identify emerging patterns and themes. The most relevant aspects of the interviews were transcribed within two days of being collected and color-coded to assist in identifying emerging trends. Data were also categorized into tables in an effort to isolate points that supported or refuted Agnew's strain theory. Diagrams and photographs were copied and the items thereon labeled and described for what appeared evident, latent or missing. A typology of gangs was developed based on different themes.

The complete analysis of data gathered was based on a data reduction process, to isolate relevant themes, patterns, categories and opposing viewpoints. The reduction involved a selection, focus, simplification, abstracting and transformation of data gathered during write-ups from the unstructured interviews. Data reduction was continuous as more important ideas and systematic themes became more pronounced. It is important to have a clear sequence and display of words in a qualitative study because otherwise analysis could be problematic.

Quality qualitative research demands that the human instrument of data collection and analysis discloses his or her paradigmatic lens. In keeping with this practice, the researchers are Black females, using critical constructivist paradigmatic lens to interpret data. This means that although the researchers approached this study critical of efforts to assist poor and marginalized minority persons, they made an effort to interpret the data as objectively as possible toward understanding how both gang members and those who work to reduce gang activity have constructed their knowledge of gangs in Houston.

Results

According to participants from the Houston Police Department (HPD) Gang Division, there are no juvenile gangs, but there are gangs with juvenile members. The department maintains a database on juvenile gang members. There is also no specificity to actual offenses committed solely by the juvenile gang members. While one researcher was visiting the HPD-Fondren Division Gang Unit, on the southwest side of Houston, she was fortunate to have made real contact with actual, former, and potential gang members in December 2009. These individuals were reluctant at times to disclose inside information about the gangs and their offenses in the presence of the researcher's police escorts. Nevertheless, the information gathered was revealing and is presented here.

During the unstructured interviews with police officers from the HPD Gang Division and the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, the participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on any factors that may have been instrumental in youths becoming involved in gangs. Participants were allowed to give recommendations of how youths might make the transition out of gangs; their thoughts of how the spread of gangs might be minimized; and how the Anti-Gang Task Force might assist youth in making a safe transition out of gang life.

Regarding Research - Question 1: How problematic is the gang situation in Houston?

The gang situation is very problematic in Houston because of its influence on crimes. According to officers

from the HPD Gang Division, and members from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, it is evident that the gangs need to be contained and their influence must be minimized to protect other impressionable youths. Gangs in communities, such as the Gulfton area, Braeswood, Bissonnet, Dashwood, and Peachtree, in particular, have caused non-gang members to live in fear. Additionally, gangs affect not only the quality of life, but the quality of the neighborhood and businesses. Thus, the gang situation creates larger problems for the city of Houston and law enforcement. These gangs are increasing, violent, and widespread.

The gangs are increasing. Based on statistics provided by the Houston Police Department Gang Division, Gang members are increasing in every racial category that is documented by the Gang Division. Table 1 depicts numbers from January 2007 to December 2009. The number of gang members increased. Juvenile members increased 56% from 2007 to 2008; however, a police participant stated that the actual numbers for juveniles may be higher than indicated, for only those who have gotten the attention of law enforcement have been documented. Additionally, based on media reports there is gang resurgence in Houston (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 2005; *Houston Chronicle*, 2006; Raziq, 2009). More recent activities point toward economic incentives, but the activities vary depending on the type of gang and the goals of that gang.

Table 1.
Houston gang members known to the Police January 2007- December 2009

January-December	Total Membership	Juvenile Members	Juvenile Members%	Marginal* Change in Juvenile Members%
2007	5,036	363	7.21	--
2008	8,135	566	6.96	55.92
2009	11,347	603	5.31	6.54

Source: (Personal communication - Ponder & Dominquez, Houston Police Department Gang Tracker (December 22, 2009).

*Marginal Change in Juvenile Members indicates incremental change in Juvenile Members

The gangs are violent. The consensus among the participants during the unstructured interview was that gangs, especially street gangs were violent mainly towards other gangs, but that the general population was safe. Officers from the HPD - Fondren Gang Division Unit stated that MS-13 and Southwest Cholos had been fighting at 57 Rampart for the past few months, which had resulted in the death of some Cholos gang members. The conflict between the two gangs is on-going. They also stated that they had seen an increase in crime incidences involving gang members from 2007 to 2009 as shown in Table 2. The number of incidents increased by

1,368 from 2007 to 2008 and the numbers seem to have stabilized by the end of 2009. The incidences included burglary, robbery, drive-bys and other crimes committed by gangs that have garnered the attention of law enforcement. Also, during a conversation with some gang members from La Primera and 59 Bounty Hunters, it was revealed that they had lost family members and friends to their gang activities. The exact cause of the trend is uncertain, but may reflect influence from other big cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles, via the internet.

Table 2.
The increase of incidents involving gang members

January-December	Crimes/Incidence
2007	3,593
2008	4,961
2009	4,965

Source: (Personal communication - Ponder & Dominquez, Houston Police Department Gang Tracker (December 22, 2009).

The gangs are widespread. Gangs are widespread throughout the city, in prison and on the streets. Some officers mentioned that sometimes juvenile gang members were considered to be affiliated only with street gangs, but that was not always the case as indicated in Table 4, which shows the five largest memberships as of December 2009, as documented by the HPD. The general perception is that members of the *Houstone* must have a prison record as a pre-requisite, but then there are a few juvenile members documented. Also, some areas, especially in the Southwest area of Houston, tended to have more documented gangs and gang members than other areas (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Examples of Southwest Houston gangs

Gang	Initials	Ethnicity	Colors
Southwest Cholos	SWC	Hispanic	Black
La Primera (90st)	LP	Hispanic	White
La Tercera Crips	LTC	Hispanic	Blue
Surenos	SUR 13	Hispanic	Blue
Somos Pocos Pero Locos	SPPL	Hispanic	White
Mara Salvatrucha	MS 13	Hispanic	Blue
Houstone Tango Blast	Houstone, PTB	Hispanic	No specific color
Black Disciples	BD	African-American	Black or Blue
Gangster Disciples	GD	African-American	Black or Blue
52 Hoover Crip	52 HC or 52 HGC	African-American	Blue
59 Bounty Hunter	59 BH	African-American	Red
Treet Top Piru	TTP	African-American	Red

Source: (Personal communication - Ponder & Dominquez, Houston Police Department Gang Tracker (December 22, 2009).

Table 4.
Showing the top five gang memberships

Gang Name	Adults	Juveniles	Juvenile%
Houstone Tango Blast	2,208	5	0.23
52 Hoovers-Crips	903	55	6.1
59 Bounty Hunters	993	23	2.32
Southwest Cholos	604	129	21.36
Bloods	422	8	1.90
Total	5,130	220	4.29

Source: (Personal communication - Ponder & Dominquez, Houston Police Department Gang Tracker (December 22, 2009).

How gangs affect communities. Being a part of the gang not only affects the individual gang member, but the family and businesses which constitute the community. According to the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office and officers from the HPD, many in the community may move to other areas because of fear. The community becomes disintegrated as businesses move away, families become separated and the reputation of the communities begins to wane. In many of the areas visited, graffiti could be seen on buildings throughout the neighborhoods. According to officers from the HPD - Fondren Gang Division Unit, the graffiti is often done by the younger members of gangs. Additionally, gangs begin to fester as the environmental conditions further enable gang activities and behaviors. Staff at the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office highlighted the impact on the family and gang member.

For instance, the impact on the family included family members living in fear. Relocation may become necessary because of threats, fights and possibilities of

being a victim of a drive-by. Also, medical and legal fees are incurred by injuries and deaths. There is also the possibility that innocent people may be caught in the web of gang violence.

In terms of the impact on the gang member there is the loss of the trust from family and friends. The gang member becomes a bad role model. He or she may become a truant and academic achievement becomes less important. In addition, the gang member lives in fear and danger of ever traveling alone, gets tattoos on the body, employment opportunities become limited, the probability of a criminal record/police contact is higher, may get probation, parole, jail or prison sentence for gang activities, and may lose life or get injured or paralyzed.

The brief encounter with juveniles who were affiliated with gangs revealed that they view the gang in a positive light. They were also uncertain about why they joined the gang, but revealed that they had family members in the gang. Some of the juvenile members from the *La Primera gang* revealed that they also had parents who held regular working jobs.

The role of females in gang. The documentation and actual knowledge of females in gangs in Houston were limited. The Houston Police Department- Gang Division officers stated that despite the fact that data indicated that there were female gang members, it was difficult to ascertain whether or not they were truly independent. Table 5 indicates that there are female gang members, but it does not show if those are actually female gangs or female members of predominantly male gangs. According to an officer, sometimes female gang members switch gangs because they were dating a gang member and so it was difficult to say to which gangs they belonged or their actual role. Additionally, some officers noted that there was still a stereotype in how gangs were viewed and how data collection was done on gangs because males were more likely to be categorized as gang members, but identifying female members is more difficult. Nevertheless, officers stated that based on their interaction with some gangs, females may play major roles and some were as brutal as male gang members. Overall, females in gangs appear to be more of a support to the male gang members than independent leaders.

Question 2: How applicable is Agnew's general strain theory of crime and delinquency to recent developments of juvenile gangs in Houston?

Agnew's general strain theory of crime and delinquency appears considerably applicable to the recent developments of juvenile gangs in Houston, Texas. Data have shown some current and former gang members have experienced what might be called strain. Agnew mentioned three variables that might cause an individual to experience strain: inability to achieve goals viewed positively, absence of legitimate goals and presence of negativity. The extent of the strain however, for the gang members was unclear.

Does Agnew's explanations account for the types of youths (individuals) who join gangs?

For example, working, middle or upper class youths, racially and ethnically? To some extent Agnew's explanations account for the types of youths who join gangs. One of the main elements of Agnew's theory in explaining strain is that there is a disparity between aspirations and expectations. Many gang members with whom the researcher held conversations revealed that respect was very important to them, and if they did not have that then they would do whatever was necessary to achieve it. In essence, joining the gang became a primary sign of status that they perceived would give them the respect that they desired. Associates from two gangs, La Primera and 59 Bounty Hunters revealed that they joined the gang because they wanted respect and they viewed the gang as family. Markedly, however, for Black gang members this drive for respect was tied to illicit drug transactions, for Hispanics there seemed to be more concern about turf. Similarly, younger gang members might seek respect from tagging (the preferred term for more artistic graffiti).

Officers from the HPD - Gang Division, individuals from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, and an officer from Furr High School stated that based on the statistics and their contacts with gang members, gang members were mostly minorities from a working class background. The individuals whom the researcher met and who claimed affiliation with gangs also described their backgrounds as working class without using that term. For example, many single-parents with very little education were living in an apartment in certain neighborhoods with unstable employment. According to a senior officer from Houston Police Department, when the Gang Division referred to working class it generally did so in terms of income status, as too often the financial burden was an underlining part of why many youths turned to gangs. Based on statistics, minorities made up approximately 92% of all gang members in Houston. As highlighted in Table 5, the numbers indicate that two racial and ethnic groups made up the majority of gang members.

Table 5.
Showing gang membership statistics - race/ethnicity and gender

Group	Male	Female	Total	Group%
Asian	40	1	41	0.35
Black	5111	76	5187	44.52
Hispanic	5411	102	5513	47.31
Indian	3	0	3	0.03
White	882	19	901	7.73
Other	7	0	7	0.06
Total	11,454	198	11,652	100

Source: (Personal communication - Ponder & Dominquez, Houston Police Department Gang Tracker (December 22, 2009).

However, five of the gang members with whom the researcher had conversations did not perceive that they belonged to gangs, but to organizations. A member from 59 Bounty Hunters stated emphatically that it is the police who labeled the organizations as gang. Indeed, one pointed out that the term *BLOODS*, a popular street gang, stood for *Brothers Leading Other Out of Darkness* and they did not consider the negative connotations that were usually attached to gangs as impacting them. This expressed sentiment made it difficult to really assess the effect of strain if there is no acknowledgment of negativity being attached to the activities by gang members.

Based on theoretical explanations and conversations with those interviewed, gang members who perceived that they were unable to achieve certain goals positively would turn to gangs. Conversations with the gang members revealed that they believed that joining a gang was the right thing and some claimed to have no regrets. When asked about their life at home many admitted that they lived in apartments and some of their relatives were also in the gang or were former gang members. Indubitably, many felt some strain or perceived that they were obligated to join a gang. Agnew examined the presence of negativity (gangs and crimes) as causing a strain, after all, gangs tended to fester in low-income areas where there was also a lot of crime. For example, the Gulfton community, (nicknamed the *Gulfton ghetto*) is believed to be the most populated neighborhood in Houston (according to research respondents from the HPD - Fondren Division Gang Unit). Most of the individuals in the area are minorities and many of the youths belong to a gang.

Does Agnew's description of strain adequately explain the disproportionate number of minorities who join gangs?

Presence of negativity (gangs, crime). Officers from the HPD - Gang Division stated that a part of the problem was that a majority of gang members were made up of minorities (see Table 5) who belong to working class families and lived in the inner cities. Many of the conditions that were common to inner cities were observed in the southwest region of Houston. Typ-ical conditions in the inner cities include many apartments, unemployed individuals, high crime rates and poor performing schools, as well as many single parents. These conditions reflected the fruits of ingrained racism. Even though gangs were everywhere and in large cities, they are more concentrated in inner-cities. With the convergence of negativity in these areas, youths experience strain amidst a fear of their conditions. As a result, many individuals were relegated into choosing one gang or the other because they needed protection from gangs/bullies, needed structure, belonging, discipline, and the gang appeared to be a promising prospect to mediate these strains.

Additionally, many gang members perceived a need to claim their hometowns and being affiliated with a particular gang made that possible and a requirement. Data revealed that for most African-American gangs, the members wanted survival and income from selling drugs, while for Hispanic gangs the focus was more territorial and family oriented. Many youths who joined the gang, did so as young as seven years old and followed in the footsteps of their relatives and friends. During the conversation with members from 59 Bounty Hunters, one member revealed that he had a daughter at 15-years-old. The cycle of children raising children meant that the gang problem was far from ceasing, as there appeared to be no one to show the offspring of very young parents anything different than the life before him or her. Essentially, the neighborhood became a stimulus for gang activities because of the amount of negativity and crime.

Absence of legitimate goals. As the common African proverb says *it takes a village to raise a child*. It is difficult for youth to grow up and make good decisions without having a positive role model. Therefore, the community/neighborhood becomes even more important in helping to define youth. As a result, where the norms are being a high school dropout, joining a gang, defending territory, selling drugs and making money, to name a few, then it becomes problematic for youth to have dreams or goals through legitimate means. In this regard, youth experience some strains to get involved in the gang because they do not believe that they have the ability to achieve goals valued positively by society.

Others may join the gang because they deem it the most accessible to obtain their objectives. Also, based on conversations with gang members, they did not believe that they were engaging in illegitimate activities because that was the life as they knew it and had seen it since they were born. In essence, it is difficult for them to even discern what legitimate goals are, given their limited purview of life and its possibilities.

Discussion

Limitations

The limitations of the study include those common to qualitative research such as the utilization of a small non-random sample, the inability to generalize, and the subjective nature of much of the data collection and interpretation. Aware of these possibilities, the researchers made a conscious effort to be as objective as possible in data collection and interpretation in the pursuit of detailed but authentic information. Another limitation is that gang members encountered during the study were unwilling to be open at times in commenting on their participation in certain activities, as the police escorted the researcher who did the interviews into the gang communities. An additional limitation is that the newspaper content that was analyzed indubitably reflected someone else's subjective approach and interpretation of the gang situation. Despite these limitations, the study is a very worthy one for the richness of detail and primary accounts that may not be generated other than by first-hand communication with those directly in contact with gang members in the city of Houston and the gang members themselves. It focused on strain as outlined by Agnew as preceding gang activities and being the main reason for youths joining the gang. The particular aspects of strain involved a strong desire for respect and the belongingness of a family. These might be indicative of their economic conditions, but the gang members did not have this in the forefront of their discourse on why they were involved with the gangs.

Conclusions and Future Implications

The results indicated that two of the tenets of Agnew's general theory of crime and delinquency - presence of negativity and absence of legitimate goals, seemed to fit the descriptions of recent juvenile gang developments in Houston. However, the results were not conclusive. Given the limited purview of this study, other factors likely contributed to the intricacies of juvenile gang membership; hence, the findings presented must be read and interpreted with caution. Possibly other theories may be a closer fit for understanding Houston's gangs. Nevertheless, the present study gives credence to some of Agnew's perspectives on the general strain theory that may be applicable to juvenile gangs.

One theoretical implication is that many of the problems could be fixed. As previously mentioned, many of the youths involved in gangs are minorities, and programs are often suggested as the solution to the problems they face. Programs play a critical role in helping to reform youths and are necessary, but alone they are insufficient. Youths who have become involved in gang activities are resistant to change because of the deep-seated problems they face in the home, neighborhood, school, and related areas. Each individual is unique, and a multi-layered approach is often best to address numerous challenges.

Based on conversations held with officers from the Houston Police Department Gang Division, Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, and former gang members, it is evident that there is a relationship between the gangs and being minorities. Minorities who are involved in gangs appear to be concentrated in poorer neighborhoods with limited resources, more crime and less education, which create a strain in forcing juveniles to face an ultimatum. Additionally, it appears as though officers are more inclined to use suppression rather than prevention in trying to resolve the juvenile gang problem in Houston. That focus means that the social isolation and violence of gangs will not be reversed in the near future. Therefore, more focus on prevention, and educating youths, parents and the communities at an earlier stage rather than later is very important. More needs to be done about the types of neighborhoods to which many youth are relegated.

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Same Bang, Less Buck: A Cost-benefit Analysis of South Carolina's Youth Courts

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Abstract

While youth courts experience tremendous growth nationwide, their utility is largely unproven, particularly in state-level contexts. This study conducted a cost-benefit analysis of South Carolina's youth courts. The study found that while youth courts and family courts produced comparable recidivism rates, youth courts were substantially less expensive for comparable adjudications. The relative efficiency of youth courts, however, was neither monolithic nor guaranteed. Individual youth courts displayed considerable variation and some youth courts were not as efficient as their traditional family court counterparts. Inefficient youth courts had low caseloads, typically resulting from inefficient or immature referral systems and a reliance on borrowed courthouse resources.

Youth courts have spearheaded a therapeutic jurisprudence movement which has recast America's justice system. Nationwide over the last decade, specialized courts and diversion programs have dramatically burgeoned with youth courts, drug courts, and domestic violence courts adding at least 800 (National Youth Court Center, 2005), 1,400 (Fox & Huddleston, 2003; National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2005), and 200 tribunals (National Center for State Courts, 2005), respectively. The impetus for these innovative justice programs has resulted, at least in part, from an increased awareness of the justice system's inadequacies in handling certain problems. Juvenile courts have been broadly criticized for inter alia, where there is clustering high-criminality juveniles and thereby fostering criminal behaviors in impressionable juveniles through social learning and imitation processes (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2001). There is also the labeling of juveniles as criminals that perniciously transforms self-perceived identities through a process of self-internalization (Lemert, 1974). Additionally, there is the disconnection of juveniles from family and social contexts, which both stunts individual development and reduces conventional order attachment (Chamberlain & Mihalic, 1998).

Emotionally intelligent justice systems (Sherman, 2003), like youth courts, attempt to provide a criminological sound therapeutic expertise to recalcitrant situations like delinquency treatment. Thus, guided by criminological theory, youth courts explicitly eschew clustering, labeling, and disconnecting, while still aggressively tackling offender problems on an individualized therapeutic basis. Youth courts are grounded in parens patriae wherein the court acts in the best interests of juveniles. Best interests are determined according to multiple factors specific to offenders and their offenses and, within youth courts, pursued through various models of justice. In general, youth court programs involve proceedings wherein young people are sentenced by their peers in, typically, either a school or courthouse setting with the cooperation of state agencies such as departments of education and juvenile justice.

A key issue in the continued success of the youth court implementation is efficiency, and youth courts are relatively unproven entities. While youth court programs are touted as a viable alternative to traditional family court-based adjudication and disposition of juvenile delinquency cases, their utility is largely uncertain, and many state-level youth court programs have not been assessed. In particular, few or no studies have analyzed a large set of state youth courts and compared the relative benefits flowing there to the benefits derived from more traditional juvenile justice approaches.

This study performs a cost-benefit analysis of South Carolina youth courts, comparing annual per-child adjudication expenses in youth courts and family courts. Youth courts were assessed collectively and individually in comparison to their traditional family court counterparts.

Method

Sample

Youth courts in South Carolina. The youth court movement in South Carolina emerged from a forged partnership between the South Carolina State Department of Education's **C**haracter, **H**onor, **A**ccountability, **N**obility, **C**ommitment, and **E**ducation Project (CHANCE) and the South Carolina State Bar Association' Law Related Education (LRE). Project CHANCE is a truancy abatement and delinquency prevention

initiative. Project CHANCE originates from the conception that youthful offenders are less likely to commit more offenses when judged delinquent by their peers. This philosophy is derived from the extant literature praising the process known as peer-reinforced norming.

The Law-related Education Act of 1978 was endorsed with the intention of providing students with knowledge and skills pertaining to the guiding principles of legal process and the legal system. Drawing from this focal curriculum, LRE in South Carolina provides students with a variety of opportunities to learn about abstract legal concepts and issues including citizenship, our governmental history, and their function in a multi-faceted society.

Youth court programs throughout the state are funded at the local, state, and federal level. While Project CHANCE and LRE characterize the brief history of South Carolina's youth court movement, the various programs differ and do not necessarily emphasize a uniform strategic approach to delinquency and related social problems. The Mt. Pleasant youth court program is the oldest in the state and dates to 1995. This was followed by highly individualized others until the South Carolina's Department of Education funded Project CHANCE initiative more than doubled the state's operative youth court programs to the current total of 21.

Design

The basic premise of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is the weighing of monetary benefits and costs. A growing body of economic analysis has analyzed the efficiency (Welsh & Farrington, 2000) and comparative efficiency of crime prevention/treatment strategies (Crew, Fridell, & Pursell, 1995; Greenwood, Model, Rydell, & Chiesa, 1996; Roman & Harrell, 2001). There are two primary strands of economic analysis in what has been loosely referred to as cost-benefit analysis: 1) Cost and cost-effectiveness analysis studies, which assess economic costs alone; and 2) Cost-benefit analysis studies, which assess costs and benefits, and are featured in this study. Both forms of analyses use methodological tools to allow for rational quantitative comparisons between alternative uses of resources (Welsh & Farrington, 2000, p. 119; Knapp, 1997, p. 11). Prior application of cost-benefit analysis in juvenile justice contexts has suggested a net benefit to community-based interventions (Robertson, Grimes, & Rogers, 2001).

CBA typically results in a ratio, which is calculated by dividing the benefits by the costs. For example, a cost-benefit ratio of 1.50 would indicate that, for each dollar spent on a publicly funded program, the public would receive $1.50 worth of services. For this approach to be successful, we must have both a common unit of measurement (such as money) and a common temporal period, to reduce inflationary factors. Creating a cost-benefit ratio facilitates determination of a net benefit, which is the sum of the value of present benefits minus the present value of costs. For example, the net

benefit of a $1 funded program that returned $1.50 was 50 cents of returned services.

There are some methodological concerns in applying cost-benefit analysis in a restorative justice context. Such an economic approach may minimize non-economic or problematically measured benefits flowing from restorative justice approaches, such as decreased use of incarceration, minimization of labeling, positive peer pressure, juvenile continuity in the community, decreased family court caseload, community service, and victim closure (Harrison, Maupin, & Mays, 2001). Likewise, the present study does include certain intangible effects flowing from crime, such as the intangible or indirect costs of victimization. Nonetheless, such an omission, was typical of cost-benefit analyses in criminal justice contexts (Welsh & Farrington, 2000, p. 128), as many methodologists question the validity of such cos-calculations (Zimring & Hawkins, 1995).

The key cost-benefit analysis regarding youth courts concerns their efficiency relative to family courts. The key goal of juvenile justice programs is to reduce recidivism (Gray, 1994). If youth courts produce comparable recidivism rates to family courts at a reduced cost, then, in the absence of other more efficient alternatives, it would be economically rational to continue, or even increase, the use of youth courts. In other words, if we get the same result with reduced expenditure through youth courts, then we should opt for that approach.

Results

Recidivism

Our research findings strongly suggested that youth courts achieve recidivism rates comparable or superior to family court recidivism rates. Over a one-year period, following adjudication, out of 2,062 adjudicated juveniles, only 90 recidivated, for a recidivism rate of 4.4%. Ridge View High School's youth court was censored from this recidivism rate because of its high number of respondents (5,000) and its atypical, non-juvenile-offense method of calculating recidivism. We have some concerns over the thoroughness of state record keeping with regard to recidivism. Meaning, there was often a lack of communication or careful follow-up of supervised youths, and it was occasionally unclear whether the youth court coordinator diligently checked on reoffending after youth court supervision had terminated. As a further caveat, this study deliberately included youth courts that were implemented in 2004, meaning that a full-year subsequent to adjudication could not elapse in every case.

Comparing the youth court recidivism rate to that of other South Carolina juvenile justice initiatives was rendered problematic due to the failure of South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice (SCDJJ) to calculate recidivism rates for juveniles under community supervision (Smith, 2002). Efforts are underway, under American Prosecutors Research Institute (2005) supervision,

to calculate comparable community supervised juveniles but final figures were unavailable for use in this report. However, according to an unofficial disclosure from a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) source, a preliminary analysis of 2,145 juveniles was conducted, and the recidivism rate was 9% during the period of community supervision.

This sample was not methodologically pure, however. The sample blended individuals supervised in the community either after probation or after juvenile arbitration. Not only did the community supervision styles reflect different juvenile justice approaches, but the supervision lengths typically varied. In that, probationary juveniles typically were supervised for 18 months, whereas juvenile arbitration participants often left supervision within six months. Nevertheless, for comparison purposes, the youth court rate compared favorably to that of established community supervision programs in South Carolina.

South Carolina's youth courts approach approximated the recidivism success of juvenile arbitration programs, which likewise employed restorative justice techniques. According to SCDJJ's (2004) Community Juvenile Arbitration Programs Fiscal Year 2003-2004 Outcomes Report, of 3,342 offenders, 2,539 offenders successfully completed juvenile arbitration supervision, whereas 295 offenders failed to comply or participate, 116 received a new offense, and 392 were dismissed from the program for unspecified reasons. This information indicated a community supervision failure rate of 24.0% over six months (the typical duration of juvenile arbitration supervision); hence, in recidivism terms, only 3.5% of arbitrated youths recidivated over 6 months.

Despite the methodological inconsistencies in DJJ's recidivism calculations, the best available rates suggested that South Carolina youth courts achieved recidivism success comparable, if not superior, to other available juvenile justice approaches. Assuming then that youth courts achieved comparable recidivism rates to family court, this study considered the cost-benefit ratio of using youth courts instead of family courts. A cost-benefit ratio greater than 1 suggested greater economic utility of youth courts.

Cost calculations

For purposes of this study, the common unit of measurement was dollars. The cost was the annual expenditure per child per youth court. The benefit was the annual family court expenditure per child. The cost-benefit ratio was determined by dividing the benefits by the costs, with a higher ratio indicating a greater public return for money invested. Considering that youth courts may represent an alternative institution able to reduce family court workloads, the net benefit of youth courts was the annual expenditure per child per family court less the annual youth court expenditure per child.

We calculated statewide annual family court expenditure per child and both statewide and court-specific annual youth court expenditures per child.

In this portion of the study, we estimated the annual per-child expenditure of family courts. Each of South Carolina's 46 counties has a family court, which meets weekly to handle family court cases. While several family courts may operate simultaneously in a county, typically only one was handling juvenile cases in any particular week. To that end, we calculated one juvenile court cost per county for each year. At these court meetings, there was typically one family court judge, one clerk of court, one court reporter, at least one Department of Juvenile Justice staff member, at least one prosecutor, at least one public defender, and at least one sheriff's deputy.

Cost calculation of these family court services was problematic, however, because family court services varied from county to county. This was so as different counties may have had more than one family court judge, as well as different staffs on hand, depending on volume and county funding. While all family courts were presided over by one judge, some courts had three full-time family court prosecutors and two full-time family court public defenders, whereas others had only one part-time family court prosecutor and one part-time family court public defender. Exact cost-benefit estimation was further complicated by the fact that different buildings may have incurred different costs, depending on a wide range of factors, including location, property values, building size, and increased staff security.

To address these methodological difficulties, we had strategically eliminated some costs from consideration, which included overhead costs and salary-related retirement costs. Overhead costs included building costs, paper costs, and jail transportation costs. The omission of such cost calculation was justified on several bases. First, every court, youth court or otherwise, would have building costs. Many youth courts used donated court space, thus saving program money. However, if youth courts expanded in use, such courts may have likewise demanded their own facilities. Just as in the case of donated youth courts, family court building costs were multipurpose, serving a variety of domestic law areas. Therefore, there was a public need to fund and maintain these courtroom spaces independently of juvenile court functions. In terms of salary-related retirement costs, such costs were proportionally related to salaries in South Carolina and were thus unnecessary for inclusion.

This study ignored costs associated with incarceration; hence, costs may have artificially inflated the net benefit of youth courts. Forms of community supervision predominate in family courts, yet such courts must also face youth-court-ineligible species of offenders, such as sex crimes or seriously violent crimes. The costs of these most serious offenders were not borne by youth courts, and incarceration was an expensive intervention practice. While youth court advocates touted the bene-

fits of youth court as an alternative to incarceration, few such proponents advocated the complete elimination of juvenile incarceration. Separating incarceration costs provided a clearer picture of the relative costs of youth court supervision and community-based family court supervision (such as probation and home detention).

To calculate costs, we determined the statewide average salary cost of processing juveniles through family court for one year, and then divided this total by the number of processed juveniles during that year. The end total represented the statewide average annual per-child cost of juvenile adjudication in family court.

According to a South Carolina Court Administration source, family court judges were paid a salary of $113,862 per year. Judicial training was estimated at $600 per year, based on state-sponsored Continuing Legal Education (CLE) training, a figure which included $200 for course costs, $250 for hotel expenses, $100 per diem costs, and $50 mileage. While bar membership costs varied, bar membership was approximately $300 per year. Multiplying the family court judicial cost of ($113,862 + $600 + $300) $114,762 by the percentage of work days allocated to juvenile justice practice (.3125) yielded a judicial cost of $35,863.13.

Certain courtroom workgroup professionals always attended a family court judge, as these individuals necessarily followed the judge, we estimated costs based on the same judicial percentage of work days allocated to juvenile justice practice. The family court clerk was typically hired by the county clerk of court, an elected official, and made approximately $28,000 a year (salaries varied considerably based on seniority). Typically, two sheriff deputies attended each judge and each made approximately $28,000 a year. A court reporter was generally present and he/she made approximately $40,000 a year. Multiplying each of these figures by .3125 yielded totals of $8,750 ($8,750*2 = $17,500) and $12,500.

Each family court handling juvenile cases likewise required prosecutors and public defenders. Calculation of costs in this context was made difficult by the fact that some courts had full-time prosecutors and public defenders devoted to family court, whereas, in other courts, the prosecutors and public defenders may only spend one day a week working on juvenile cases. To resolve this issue, we again took the average of five counties, which included nine full-time solicitors, three full-time public defenders, and four part-time public defenders. As part-time public defenders split their time with other court responsibilities, each counted as 0.2, which reflected the percentage of the work week spent in one day of juvenile court. A division of all the totals by five produced a result of (9/5) 1.8 full-time solicitors per county and (3.8/5) 0.76 full-time public defenders per county.

The median family court solicitor salary was approximately $45,000 per year. This figure was obtained by averaging the starting salaries of family court assistant solicitors from two counties and likely underestimated the actual salary of more experienced prosecutors. Like judges, prosecutorial CLE training involved approximately $600 per year, and prosecutor bar dues were approximately $300 per year. The resulting total was $45,900 per year per full-time solicitor. Multiplying this total by 1.8 equaled an average of $82,620 annual juvenile court solicitor cost per year.

The median family court public defender salary was approximately $34,000, again taking the average of known salaries. Like judges and solicitors, public defender CLE training involved approximately $600 per year, and bar dues were approximately $300 per year. The resulting total was $34,900, which, multiplied by the number of full-time public defenders per county (0.76) yielded $26,524.00 in annual juvenile court public defender cost per year.

Department of Juvenile Justice Caseworkers and administrators attended each juvenile court session. These DJJ employees were full-time and were responsible for attendance in court, juvenile processing, evaluation, disposition recommendations, and community supervision. Again, different counties had different numbers of DJJ employees, and, to allow for one overall statewide, we took the sum of DJJ employees from five counties (38) and divided the result by 5, to reach a county average of 7.6 full-time DJJ employees per juvenile court. The average DJJ salary varied widely, based on position and experience, but the median was approximately $32,000. Multiplying $32,000 by 7.6 DJJ employees yielded $243,200 in annual juvenile court DJJ costs per year. Significantly, the amount excluded reference to DJJ employees handling incarceration or institutionalized supervision, as previously noted.

One methodological concern at this point was the difference in youth court and family court supervision periods; in that, youth court supervision was typically shorter, terminating within six months and family court supervision, by contrast, often lasts 18 months. However, for both court systems, the salary costs associated with supervision was a fixed cost; meaning, in-court employees and staff remained on the same per-day salary and handle the same caseload. Therefore, no separate cost assessment was conducted for the difference in supervision length.

For fiscal year 2004, family courts handled 27,328 cases (SCDJJ, 2004). To determine an average number of cases handled per county, we divided this figure by the number of South Carolina counties (46), which yielded 594 cases (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Annual Statewide Family Court Costs

Family judge court	$35,863.13
Clerk of court	$7,750.00
Deputy sheriffs	$17,500.00
Court reporter	$12,500.00
Solicitors	$82,620.00
Public defenders	$26,524.00
DJJ employees	$243,200.00
TOTAL	$426,957.13
Cases per county per FY '03--04	954

ANNUAL STATEWIDE FAMILY COURT PER-CHILD EXPENDITURE: $718.78

In this section, we calculated the annual youth court per-child expenditure, both for individual youth courts and for the state as a whole. The calculations in this section were considerably simpler than in the previous section; in that, we took allocated money for one year and divided that amount by adjudications during that year. In cases of youth courts existing less than one year, we pro-rated the adjudications proportionally to the rest of the year; that is, for six-month-operating courts, we artificially doubled the adjudications.

The biggest complication in calculating costs was youth court training expenses. Both adult coordinators and youth court volunteers received training, the cost of which varied according to the number of volunteers, training location, and trainer type. The following was a breakdown of potential costs, provided by South Carolina's Department of Education (see Table 2).

There were three main types of youth court training that youth volunteers and adult coordinators received site training, regional training, and National Youth Court Center (NYCC) training. The cost of these trainings varied based on the number of volunteers, the location of the training and whether full time staff or youth court trainers conducted the training. South Carolina's Department of Education graciously provided a general breakdown of costs associated with training type (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Youth Court Training Costs

Item	Site Training	Regional Training	NYCC Training
Conducted by	Site Coordinator, YC Trainer or SDE/SC Bar	YC Trainer, SC Bar, SDE	National Youth Court Center
Registration fee	N/A	N/A	$150
Length of training	3-6 hours	3-6 hours	2 1/2 days
Lodging, per diem	N/A	N/A	$150/3 nights & $32/day * 3 days (out of state)
Transportation	N/A	$100/bus (incl bus & driver)	$350 (cost of flight)
# of attendees	20-30	100-120	N/A
Refreshments	$7/attendee	$7/attendee	Varies
Materials (can include copies of handouts, folders, pens, notepads)	$50/training	$100/training	Incl in registration cost

Youth court trainers have been trained by the South Carolina Bar and by the State Department of Education and were paid a stipend (from IOLTA funding) when conducting youth court trainings. For instance, one day's work of six to seven hours was compensated $300, and a half day's work (two to three hours) was compensated $150.

Each youth court had, or was scheduled for, at least one of each type of training. Typically, each court had training once each month and served refreshments. Our inquiries revealed 224 site training sessions over 21, for an average of approximately 11 (rounding up). The average court, then, had 10 site trainings and one regional training. The youth court coordinator was also typically sent for NYCC training. Each site training was (average 25 attendees * $7/attendee + $50 in materials) approximately $225, for a total of $2,250 per year. Each regional training must be assessed at one fifth of the trainer costs, due to the fact that multiple youth courts were in attendance. The total costs per regional training were estimated as ([25 attendees * $7 for refreshments] + [$300 / 5 for trainer] + [$100 for bus] + [$100 /5 for materials]) $355. NYCC training totaled ([$150 registration fee] + [$546 lodging/per diem] + [$350 flight])

$1,046. The average annual training cost per youth court was calculated at ($2250 + $355 + $1046) $3,651. Some courts, however, had training costs built in to overall funding, and separate estimates were unnecessary.

Incarceration savings

The reported youth court benefits did not include incarceration savings. The exclusion of incarceration costs altogether was somewhat problematic because increased utilization of youth courts ultimately would reduce incarceration costs in two primary ways. First, youth courts themselves did not have the authority to impose incarceration, so community supervision failures did not directly lead to extreme direct costs. Second, youth court community supervision failures, as a worst-case scenario, would result in a DJJ referral to family court. At that point, the juvenile would be evaluated for community supervision or incarceration, just as would any other juvenile. The end result is that youth courts provide an additional buffer layer prior to the extreme and costly step of juvenile incarceration.

In South Carolina, under traditional family court supervision, there were four typical outcomes: immediate alternative disposition, such as juvenile pretrial intervention, arbitration, or behavioral contracts; immediate community supervision, exemplified by probation; incarceration in an intermediate temporary holding facility for evaluation, such as juvenile reviews at the Midlands Evaluation Center (MEC); and juvenile incarceration at long-term facilities, which were considered final sentencing options. Often, DJJ-supervised individuals were evaluated at MEC prior to receiving community supervision. For individuals failing supervision in family court, incarceration was the likely result. Unfortunately, there was an enormous cost difference between community-based and incarceration-based approaches, with the latter costing as much as $40,000 per year per juvenile. Any incarceration avoidance saved the state significant resources.

Methodologically, we encountered a dilemma. On one hand, cost estimates of incarceration savings were speculative. On the other hand, failure to make such estimates would systematically underestimate youth court benefits. Unfortunately, we had no data to compare the rates at which youth court juveniles avoided incarceration compared to similarly situated direct family court referrals. Obtaining precise figures would have required a quasi-experimental design with careful case selection to match background variables across experimental and control groups.

Our solution to this dilemma was to make a general estimate of the cost savings of avoiding incarceration risk from a family court referral, in full realization of the estimate's methodological limitations. This estimate was performed for academic reasons only and was included in the reported findings.

In 2003-2004, out of 27,328 family court referrals, 1,977 family court juveniles were incarcerated, for an incarceration rate, of 7.2%. Thus, approximately one in 14 family-court referred juveniles were incarcerated. Any avoidance of family-court referral would have, therefore, saved the state the cost associated with a 7.2% risk of incarceration. There was no concrete data available on South Carolina's median juvenile incarceration length, so assumptions would be necessary to assess costs. Typically, any incarcerated juvenile would attend a temporary evaluative facility for at least one month. This incarceration was not a final commitment, but served to give the judge information concerning the juvenile's needs.

Costs of juvenile incarceration varied by program, and no clear figures were publicly available for South Carolina as to the percentage of intermediate referrals that went on to permanent referrals. We assumed, however, a conservative baseline cost of $20,000 per incarcerated juvenile per year, which was consistent or undercuts any obtainable estimate nationwide. We assumed (based on working experience), also, that 25% of incarcerated juveniles received an additional six months of incarceration. The cost of each incarcerated juvenile was at least ($20,000 / 12) $1,666 for the evaluative incarceration. For the 25% that received an additional period of incarceration, the additional cost was ($20,000 / 2) $10,000 per juvenile. Thus, the average cost of incarceration per incarcerated juvenile was ($1,666 + ($10,000/4)) $4,166. Considering that 1 in 14 family court referrals would be incarcerated, the potential cost savings of avoiding family court referral was ($4,166 * .072) approximately $299.95. Therefore, we informally estimated that, in addition to previously mentioned youth court cost savings relative to family court, any youth court referral which avoided an eventual family court referral saved South Carolina nearly $300.00 (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3.
Annual Statewide Youth Court Costs

Total youth court expenditures	$373,801
Total youth court adjudications	676
Total annual youth court expenditure/child	$552.96
Cost-benefit ratio of youth court services	1.30
Net benefit ratio of youth court services	$165.82

Table 4
Youth Court Expenditures

Counties	Funding Total	Avg. Training	Total Expenses	Cases (pro-rated)	Annual Expend. per	Cost-benefit ratio	Net benefit per child
Aiken	600	3,651	4,251	23	184.83	3.89	533.95
Allendale	45,039	included	45,039	23	1,958.21	0.37	-1,239.43
Bamberg	53,853	included	53,853	22	2,447.86	0.29	-1,729.08
Berkeley	1,500	3,651	5,151	2	2,575,50	0.28	-1,856.72
Charleston	30,000	3,651	33,651	85	395.89	1.82	322.89
Charleston (Mt. Pleasant)	20,000	3,651	23,651	63	375.41	1.92	343.37
Charleston (North Chas.)	7,000	3,651	10,651	61	174.61	4.12	544.17
Clarendon	11,857	3,651	15,508	44	352.45	2.04	366.33
Colleton	18,000	3,651	21,651	12	1,804.25	0.40	-1,085.47
Dorchester	18,000	3,651	21,651	87	248.86	2.89	469.92
Fairfield	8,000	3,651	11,651	12	970.92	0.74	-252.14
Greenville	18,000	3,651	21,651	25	866.04	0.83	-147.26
Greenwood	3,600	3,651	7,521	4	1880.25	0.38	-1,161.47
Greenwood (W.S.)	18,000	3,651	21,651	28	773.25	1.08	-54.47
Marlboro	18,000	3,651	21,651	12	1804.25	2.51	-1.085.47
Richland (Alcorn MS)	13,090	3,651	16,741	24	697.54	1.03	21.24
Richland (Eau Claire HS)	175	3,651	3,826	97	39.44	18.22	679.34
Richland (W.A. Perry MS)	18,000	3,651	21,651	24	902.13	0.80	-183.35
Richland (Ridge View HS)	0	3,651	3,651	940	3.88	185.25	714.90
Sumter	8,750	3,651	12,401	18	688.94	1.04	29.84
Work (drug ct.)	111,000	included	111,000	10	11,100	0.06	-10,381.22

Discussion

Efficiency-wise, youth courts showed considerable promise, producing comparable recidivism rates at reduced cost. The relative efficiency of youth courts, however, was neither monolithic nor guaranteed. Individual youth courts displayed considerable variation, and some youth courts were not as efficient as their traditional family court counterparts.

The most obvious finding was that youth courts saved money. Each juvenile passing through a youth court rather than a family court saved South Carolina $165.82 (see Table 3). Youth courts possessed a number of fiscal advantages over traditional court services. Youth courts employed fewer personnel by far, and, frequently, the personnel employed were only part-time. Due to their relatively informal nature, youth courts avoided the expenses of court stenography, extensive record- and docket-keeping, and prosecution and defense costs. Youth courts' avoidance of violent offend-

ers reduced associated security expenses and its community-based approach avoided prisoner transport costs. Supervision costs were likewise streamlined; in that, the youth court coordinator handled all supervisory issues, compared with DJJ's team approach. Some youth courts further saved money through use of volunteers and even donated working spaces. Such cost savings, however, may not be sustainable if youth courts were adopted on a broad-scale, permanent basis.

While the majority of youth courts exhibited net benefits, a sizeable minority did not. A consistent feature of this minority was low caseloads, which accounted for the low cost-benefit ratio. The study identified a number of possible reasons for low youth court caseloads: an inefficient referral system; an immature referral system; and a reliance on borrowed courthouse resources.

In terms of an inefficient referral system, some youth courts lacked a systematic and comprehensive referral method. For example, one youth court relied

wholly on school disciplinary referrals; the school referred only a handful of cases and then closed for the summer, resulting in a poor cost-benefit ratio. The youth court, in this case, was underutilized; in that, the school did not provide sufficient cases to justify costs. A number of youth courts complained of down time during which youth courts met, had no case to process, but instead did mock proceedings or engaged in further training, while providing refreshments, training materials, and frequently transportation. Cooperative efforts with local law enforcement, DJJ, and solicitor's offices may increase caseloads for underutilized courts. Courts which employed rigorous and rapid methods for acquiring and processing cases handled higher caseloads.

With regard to an immature referral system, many youth courts were less than one year old and the referral system was under development. These newly developed youth courts were training participants, establishing local connections, and implementing procedures. We anticipated that these new courts would improve cost-benefit ratios over time, which would be consistent with their peers' general trends.

Additionally, in regards to a reliance on borrowed courthouse resources, youth courts which met at courthouses tended to meet less frequently, likely due to scheduling and security constraints. These courts suffered backlogs similar to those encountered in traditional court systems. Youth courts which met at schools, by contrast, operated more flexibly and met more frequently.

The findings produced here suggest that youth courts, at least in some instances, are capable of providing considerable savings for the juvenile justice system. Future research should be replicated in additional jurisdictions where youth courts are utilized to address adolescent delinquency. Similarly, more precise estimations of costs and benefits may also enable greater understanding of their efficiency in processing non-serious delinquents relative to the traditional family court system. Though youth courts represent a promising approach to increasing system effectiveness and efficiency, much more rigorous empirical research is needed before vigorous endorsements of the approach can be made.

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Author's Note

The Relationship Between Race and Suicide Ideation in Delinquent Females in the Texas Juvenile Justice System

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Abstract

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) reported that suicide is the second leading cause of death among people between the ages of 14 to 25 in the United States. This research examined the effect race has on suicidal ideation among a cohort of delinquent girls in Texas. This study examined 2004 data provided by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission on referrals to the juvenile justice system in Texas (N = 6850). Other variables such as age, family structure, and sexual abuse were also examined to determine the strength and effect that sexual abuse has on a juvenile becoming suicidal. The results revealed that race has a minor effect on suicidal thoughts among females in the juvenile justice system when controlling for sexual abuse, age, and family structure. Implications for practice are further explained.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2002) reported that suicide is the second leading cause of death among juveniles between the ages of 14 and 25 years. Nearly 30% of high school adolescents claimed to have thought seriously about attempting suicide during the previous year. Eight percent of students said they had attempted to kill themselves (CDC, 2002). With the issue of suicide at the forefront, it is clear that children who are abused by a caregiver or a trusted individual suffer long-lasting damage. It is also becoming clearer that adolescent suicide and abuse might be interrelated. This study examined the influence that a child's race might have on her thoughts of suicide. Would an abused girl, from a minority group, be more likely to think of suicide than a Caucasian girl? This research strives to determine how much of an impact an abused girl's environment would have on her suicide ideation.

In the life of a juvenile, adolescence is often referred to as a chaotic time with sudden biological and social changes (Barber, 1994). Conflict is part of normal development during adolescence (Tubman & Lerner, 1994). This conflict usually pertains to developmental experiences such as chores, finances, dissatisfaction with physical appearance and even experimentation with substance abuse (Galambos & Almeida, 1992). However, these juveniles also have to deal with conflicts involving family relations, school difficulties, curfews, dating issues, friends, and sexual behavior topics, which typically cause disagreements between parents and their teenagers (Barber, 1994). For most juveniles, these conflicts are a natural part of growing up and learning to become an adult. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Scahill, 2000), a young person who was between the ages of 7 and 17

years old was more likely to be a victim of suicide than a victim of homicide. Since the 1980s, for every one juvenile female suicide there were four male suicides (OJJDP).

As females commit fewer suicides than their male counterparts, the research is clear that females are victimized at a much higher rate than males (OJJDP, 2000). Experiences with abuse are alarmingly high among adolescent females involved with the criminal justice system. The statistics showed that up to 92% were a victim of some form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, while 56% reported sexual abuse (Acoca, 1998; see also Holsinger, Belknap, & Sutherland, 1999). Research on suicide for adolescents between 15 and 19 years-old revealed that during the 1950s to 1990s, the rate of suicides went up by 300% and between 1990 and 2003, that rate went down by 35% (CDC, 2002). The possible effect of this abuse can manifest itself in problems in the future.

This research will, therefore, attempt to address the question of how much of an effect race has on delinquent females in the juvenile justice system are becoming suicidal. Furthermore, it will fill in the gap in the literature by focusing on a sample of delinquent children rather than exploring the entire population of youth. This will allow administrators in the juvenile justice system to formulate programs that will focus on these abused children and prevention of entrance into the justice system.

Numerous research studies have examined the risk factors and suicide attempts by age, race, educational level, family history, religion, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, and other demographic variables (D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1996). These studies focused on the person who may be at risk, but did not specify why a specific adolescent might be more prone to suicide. Adolescents who had an increased risk of suicide were those that had substance abuse issues, psychiatric and medical problems, stress, and antisocial

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behavior (D'Augelli et al., 1996; Levy, Jurkovic, & Spirito, 1995).

Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Suicide

Gould, Greenberg, Velting, and Shaffer (2003) argued that there was very little relationship between race, socioeconomic status and suicide. Suicidal behaviors often cross the lines of class and even race. Goldsmith, Pellmar, Kleinman, and Bunney (2002) have developed various protective factors that would be likely to decrease a juvenile's chances of becoming suicidal. The protective factors are family cohesion, religious affiliation and participation, self-esteem, direction, resiliency, determination, optimism, and empathy (Gould et al., 2003; Goldsmith et al., 2002). Goldsmith et al. (2002) noted that coping skills were a large problem the juveniles had failed to learn. These adolescents have not learned how to solve problems effectively. Moreover, these at-risk juveniles needed an effective caregiver that could assist them with problems. Coping skills become hindered because the caregiver probably abused the child and the healthy lessons were not reinforced or taught. Researchers have studied the relationship between social strain, race, and suicidal behavior.

In finding a way to measure this strain, many studies have included race as a control variable in regression models of suicide and suicidal behavior (Watt & Sharp, 2002). Scientists have stated that there were theoretical and empirical causes to believe that the variables of suicidal behavior may differ between Black and White adolescents (Watt & Sharp, 2002). Most of the previous research on juvenile suicide has centered on psychological variables, however, it has been suggested that external strains are important in suicidal decision making. Few studies have compared African-American and Anglo suicide attempts; hence, a weakness to this research is that they do not identify predictors between attempters and non-suicidal populations (Watt & Sharp, 2002). Several researchers have argued that Blacks are not as likely as Whites to respond to social strain with suicide or that they are more likely to respond to strains and less likely to respond to status strains than Whites (Watt & Sharp, 2002). Even more alarming is the effect of strain on Hispanic female juveniles' suicidal ideations.

The fastest-growing group of minority females in the nation is Hispanic females who are between the ages 12 to 17 years; they are also at a higher risk of attempting suicide than their counterparts of any other racial or ethnic group. CDC (2002) reported that approximately 25% of young Hispanic females thought of committing suicide, while 15% of these girls attempted suicide. This is 1.5 times the 10% each of Anglo and Black adolescent females who attempt suicide. Approximately two million young Hispanic females in the United States attempted suicide in recent years (Fletcher, 2009). In basic terminology, Hispanic adolescent females in this country are at more risk of attempting suicide than any other group of adolescents.

The research indicates that Hispanic female adolescents experience severe strain due to the cultural conflicts they experience in the United States (Fletcher, 2009). Studies also indicated that this population of girls was often caught between popular U.S. culture, which encouraged adolescent girls to be powerful and flirtatious, and the more traditional cultures of their parents' Latino home countries, which valued modesty, conformity and female deference to male figures (Fletcher, 2009). In public, these girls are pressured to fit the societal norms of the United States. At home, the girls' families pressure them to fit the societal norms of their home countries, even though the families are not living in an area where their cultural norms are practiced or even understood. This same population of girls experience intense emotions without having the proper inner tools to process these strong emotions, which may lead to self-injurious behaviors such as cutting and performing actions that may lead to suicide, whether or not suicide was intended.

Non-race-related Predictors of Suicide Attempts

In Joiner's (2005) research, the utilization of variables such as individual medical history, family psychiatric history and problems, family of origin issues, childhood abuse, and parental history of suicide attempts were better predictors of suicidal attempts than race. Suicidal behaviors often cross the lines of class and even race. The literature indicates that race does play a significant factor in the juvenile justice system and suicide, but offers little significant influence within the confines of the research (Watt & Sharp, 2002).

Method

Participants

A large diverse sample of delinquents was utilized in this research. This study examined 2004 data collected by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) from referrals to local juvenile probation departments. The sample was then limited to only females that were referred to the juvenile justice system in Harris County, Texas, between the ages of 10 and 17 years (n = 6,850). No juvenile in our sample was or exceeded the age of 18 years because Texas law does not consider these young people to be juveniles for the purpose of referral to the juvenile justice system. The mean age of the entire sample of juvenile females is 15.24 years with a standard deviation of 1.27 years.

Materials

Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument Version 2 (MAYSI-2). The MAYSI-2 is a screening tool used to assist in the identification of various types of mental/emotional disturbance, distress, or patterns of

problem behavior (Grisso & Barnum, 2000). The primary goal of this assessment tool is to alert the administrator to potential needs and triage for high-priority immediate response. According to its authors, the MAYSI-2 is not intended to render diagnoses but merely to identify youths who may have special mental health needs including suicidal thoughts. Like any other screening instrument, the MAYSI-2 is a first look at the child's possibility of mental health needs. This instrument does not seek to diagnose mental disorders or to provide information to the practitioner concerning important and long-term interventions (Grisso & Barnum, 2000). In Texas, the MAYSI-2 was mandated by state law in 2001 to be administered to all juveniles referred to local juvenile probation departments at formal intake by certified juvenile probation officers who have been trained to administer the instrument (Espinosa, Schwank, & Tolbert, 2003). The level of suicide ideation is based upon scores on the MAYSI-2. These responses were given to the juvenile probation department within Harris County, Texas. The variables being measured were the relationship sexual abuse has on suicide ideation. Suicide ideation is extracted from reported responses to the MAYSI-2 standardized instrument.

Design and Procedure

Independent variables. The data were coded to account for the independent and dependant variables, respectively. These variables were race, age, sexual abuse and family structure. These codes included race, with White/Caucasian being 0 and 1 for minority (non-Whites). Hispanic, African-Americans, and Asians were included in the non-White category. The rationale for this variable's use was to understand the impact minorities had on the thesis. Additionally, the use of this variable was due to the over-representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system, according to the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (Sickmund, 2004).

This sample included only children 10 through 17 years of age. Children under the age of 10 and over the age of 17 (over age of initial entry into system) were excluded, as in the State of Texas these ages would not be included in the juvenile justice system. The next variable was sexual abuse. Sexual abuse (SuspectE) was converted from a Yes, No, Suspected, and Unknown to Yes and No, with No including the unknown responses. Children suspected as being victims of child abuse were converted to Yes, as the abuse was, although not officially reported, likely did occur based upon the decision of the certified juvenile probation officer conducting the assessment interview. All abuse was self-reported to the assessment officer and the MAYSI-2 questionnaire. The next variable was the child's family structure (ChildLIV). The code included if the child lived in a two parent household or in an extended or blended family arrangement. Our goal was to see how much of an influence living arrangements in a nuclear family or extended family had on our dependant variable.

Dependent variable. The dependent variable consisted of the suicide ideation score on the MAYSI-2. This variable was coded the MAYSI-2 suicide ideation score (SI: 0 = No, 1 = Yes). The MAYSI -2 classifies suicide ideation on a scale from 0 to 5 (0 = no suicide ideation to 5 = severe ideation). Juveniles that scored 0 were classified as no suicidal ideation and all other scores were considered suicide ideation. This was to include all degrees of severity within suicide ideation. We considered all reports of suicidal thoughts to be relevant, not just varying degrees. The SI scale of the MAYSI-2 has five questions. Three of the questions specifically addressed a juvenile's thoughts about harm and two of the questions involve depressive symptoms that may present increased risk for suicide. One of the items, question 5, is shared with the depressed-anxious scale. The following were the questions asked within the SI scale section:

1. Have you wished you were dead?
2. Have you felt like life was not worth living?
3. Have you felt like hurting yourself?
4. Have you felt like killing yourself?
5. Have you given up hope for your life?

Data analyses. Due to the dependent variable (suicide ideation) being measured as a dichotomy, logistic regression was chosen as the appropriate statistical method of estimation for the multivariate analysis (Fox, 2008). The multivariate regression equation was as follows:

$$Si \text{ (Suicide Ideation)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ (Race)} + \beta_2 \text{ (SUSPECE)} + \beta_3 \text{ (ChildLIV)} + \beta_4 \text{ (Age)} + e$$

Results

This analysis utilized a data set that consisted of all female juveniles who have been referred to the juvenile justice system in Harris County, Texas. To accurately predict the affect that race has on sexual abused suicidal females, logistic regression was utilized. As previously noted, for the purposes of this research the race variable was dichotomized into White/Caucasian and non-White minorities, respectively. This was to allow for a clearer analysis of minorities versus the non-minority. In examining the descriptive analysis of the sample, the results indicate that Whites (n = 1,790) made up 26.1% of the entire sample, while minorities or non-Whites (n = 5,060) made up 73.9% of the sample (see Table 1). It is clear that non-Whites made up more of the population of juvenile females in the sample. This is not unusual because the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission reported that there were more minority females in the Texas juvenile justice system than their non-White counterparts (Espinosa et al., 2003).

Table 1.
Frequency Distribution of Juvenile Females in Sample. (N = 6850)

Variables	%	Frequency
Race		
White	26.1	26.1
Non-White (Minority)	73.9	73.9
ChildLiv (Child Lives with)		
Both Parents (Mother/Father)	10.8	740
Other	89.2	6110
SuspectE (Sexual abuse)		
No Reported Sexual Abuse	90.7	6214
Reported Sexual Abuse	9.3	636
SISCORE (MAYSI Suicide Ideation Score)		
No Suicide Ideation	82.3	5636
Suicide Ideation	17.7	1214

Race

Minority or non-White offenders represented a larger portion of offenders in the juvenile justice system in Texas; however, they reported a lower rate of suicidal ideation than their White counterparts. The difference between each White and minority being suicidal and sexually abused was 4.2 age points. Therefore, in this representative sample of juvenile females, minorities outnumbered the White juveniles 73.9 to 26.1 percent respectively (see Table 1). Nevertheless, more minorities than Whites had indicated on the MAYSI-2 screening instrument that they had exhibited some degree of suicidal tendencies. Minorities were only 75% as likely to report suicidal ideation to their White counterparts (Odds Ratio = .757). Table 4 breaks down the raw numbers of juveniles in the sample by race that reported sexual abuse and suicidal thoughts to those that were not sexual abused or reported any suicidal thoughts.

The results also indicated that 1,404 Whites reported no history of suicidal ideation and 386 White juvenile females reported having suicidal ideation. The data indicated that 22% of the White population of juveniles in the sample was suicidal compared to the 16.3% of minority population of juvenile females. Again, for the purposes of the study's explanation of race of juvenile females, the variables were converted to a dichotomous format. This research utilized 0 as White and 1 as non-White minority. After an examination of the regression coefficients, in regards to race of the juvenile female, this research found that for minorities, suicidal ideation decreased (Odds Ratio: -.279, sig.). In other

words, minority females were only 75 percent as likely in comparison to whites to report suicide ideation. Thus, this research may conclude that race may have a minor effect (Odds Ratio = .757) on juvenile suicide ideation, but not a very significant one.

Table 1 also indicates that children reported sexual abuse at a much lower rate than being suicidal. Table 1 also indicates that non-White minorities made up almost three-fourths of the entire sample. In Harris County, Texas, Whites did not make up the majority racial composition. The findings indicated that female juveniles that lived in two parent households consisted of only one-tenth of the entire population. Suicidal delinquent females were also more likely to live with their mother and father than other blended family situations. However, accounting for sexual abuse, over 90 percent of the population reported having no history of sexual abuse. Juvenile female delinquents who were involved in the juvenile justice system in Harris County exhibited a rating of suicidal ideation 18% of the time (See Table 1). Of the 636 reported incidents of sexual abuse of juveniles that were referred into the juvenile justice system, almost 20% of those have reported some form of suicide ideation. The percent of each White and minority being suicidal and being sexually abused was a 4.2% difference. In evaluating the sexual abuse variable, children were more likely to become suicidal when they had reported to youth authorities that they had been sexually abused. According to the data included in Table 2, 15.5% of females that had reported being suicidal lived in an extended or blended family arrangement rather than with a two parent household consisting of their mother and father only.

Table 2.
Relationship between Predictor Variables and Suicidal Ideation

Variables	% No Suicide	% Suicide Ideation	Chi-Square
Race			24.525***
White	78.4	21.6	
Non-White (Minority)	83.6	16.4	
ChildLiv (Child Lives with)			200.317***
Both Parents (Mother/Father)	84.5	15.5	
Other	63.5	36.5	
SuspectE (Sexual abuse)			7.01**
No Reported Sexual Abuse	82.7	17.3	
Reported Sexual Abuse	78.5	21.5	

*p < .05   **p < .01   *** p < .001

Family Structure

A two-parent, mother and father, living arrangement accounted for more than twice the percentage of suicide ideation in comparison to an extended or blended family. This proposes that there may be a strong negative influence that a two-parent living relationship may have on suicidal females in the juvenile justice system. In Table 3, the variables that were examined in this study were significant and showed little sign of multi-collinearity. Nonetheless, the largest correlation, negatively speaking, existed between the suicidal score and who the child lives with variables (-.171). As indicated in Table 3, the age column indicates a weak negative correlation with the other predictor variables. An explanation could be that the age range of the juveniles was modified to include juveniles that only ranged in age from 10 through 17 years. Due to a low correlation of these variables, confidence was high that these variables would not produce collinearity when running a regression model.

Table 3.
Variable Correlation Analysis

Variables	RACE	CHILDLIV	SUSPECTE	AGE	SISCORE
RACE		.057***	.005	-.099***	-.060***
CHILDLIV			.022	-.034**	-.171***
SUSPECTE				-.032**	.032**
AGE					-.050
SISCORE					

*p < .05   **p < .01   *** p < .001

Table 4.
Logistic Regression Estimates for the Determinants of Suicide Ideation (N = 6850)

Variables	B	SE	Wald	Exp (B)
Race	-.279	.071	15.613	.757*
Child Lives With	-1.128	.085	177.615	.324*
Suspect Sexual Abuse	.321	.104	9.595	1.379*
Age	.062	.026	5.762	1.064*
Constant	-1.352	.413	10.708	.259*

*p < .05   **p < .01   *** p < .001
Pseudo R² = .048
Variance Inflation Factor (VIF): 1.007
Outcome variable: Suicidal Ideation (SI)

Sexual abuse

In examining the child sexual abuse variables, the research indicated that children that were sexually abused were significantly more likely to report suicidal ideations (Odds Ratio: 1.37). In other words, if a child was sexually abused they were more likely to become suicidal. For every yearly increase in age a juvenile female was 6 percent more likely to report suicidal ideations (Odds Ratio: 1.064). The strongest regression relationship was the child's living arrangement variable. In our research, a child that lived with both of her parents was 32% as likely to report suicidal ideations (-1.126, sig.). Minorities were only 75% as likely to report suicidal ideation as their White counterparts. Our data indicated that sexually abused juveniles and non-sexually abused juveniles reported a close rate of suicidal ideation. These variables had a difference of only 4.2%.

In understanding the effect that race has on suicidal delinquent girls, this research indicated that race had a minor effect on a child's suicidal ideation. We also may conclude that sexual abuse and age could increase a female's likelihood of becoming suicidal. Prevention programs that focus on family relationships to address sexual abused children are needed to combat this epidemic. Race does not need to be a strong consideration when developing these types of programs.

Discussion

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among juveniles and young people between the ages of 14 and 25 years (CDC, 2002). More attention needs to be paid to the biological and social changes that a juvenile goes through during the puberty years. Juveniles must have a place to be able to express their concerns and a healthy adult who can offer sound advice and guidance to this adolescent.

Increased caregiver involvement

For the juvenile to have a greater chance at successfully avoiding further involvement with the justice system, or subsequent suicide ideation and/or attempts, the treatment for sexual abuse issues cannot stop when the juvenile's involvement with the justice system stops. Parents and primary caregivers of these juveniles must be educated to recognize signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, related issues and suicidal behavior. Educating parents and caregivers in these areas will decrease their feelings of helplessness and hopelessness should the juveniles begin displaying harmful or depressive behaviors. This will empower the caregivers to become involved with the juveniles when the behaviors reappear. When a juvenile becomes involved with the justice system, the juvenile's entire family also becomes involved by proxy. In that, parents must appear in court

with the juveniles, are often forced to pay fines and court or supervision costs, and can be held responsible by the courts if the juvenile's delinquent behavior does not cease. Training parents and caregivers to be involved with the juvenile justice system, including not only practices and procedures but also continuous involvement in the juveniles' recovery, may encourage the juveniles to succeed. This could also make navigating the entire juvenile justice process smoother and less traumatic for the juvenile and the family.

One possible means of educating parents on their juveniles' probation would be to hold monthly or quarterly workshops, perhaps at a local probation office. These workshops could become a meeting place for parents and probation officers or other professionals to learn about topics that would teach them how to be the parent of a youth in the probation system. Such topics could include: parenting skills; non-physical, proactive discipline of youths in the foster care system; probation requirements, including school attendance, fees and completion of community service; and signs of depression, stress, sexual abuse and suicidal ideation. While youths who are in the juvenile justice system are exposed to any number of helping professionals, the parents and/or caregivers of these at-risk youths are still the frontline experts who deal with their children on a regular and ongoing basis. Equipping these caregivers and parents with better tools with which to address their juveniles' issues will in turn give these youths a more effective support system. Eventually, this may help at-risk juveniles become more successful at making smart choices- and completing probation requirements.

Another method to decrease the likelihood of prior sexual abuse would be educating young children of the need to tell their parents, or a teacher or trusted friend after an adult has abused them. This would entail educating the student in the schools on abuse and what is not acceptable touching. This education may give a child an avenue of a safe place to go when they are being abused.

Hispanic population

Given that research demonstrates that there is additional concern about the suicidal ideation, and attempts, of the adolescent Hispanic female population, this group should be treated as a special population within the juvenile justice system. Hispanic female juveniles have been shown to have 1.5 times the suicidal ideation of their Black and Anglo counterparts. This higher percentage is more concerning given that Hispanic female adolescents are also the fastest-growing adolescent group in the United States today. It is critical that parents of Hispanic juvenile females become educated about and involved in their daughters' experience with the juvenile justice system. This population struggles with reconciliation of the cultural duality it experiences every day-the modernization and industrialism that is valued in Amer-

ica-and the centuries-old traditionalism valued in Latino nations. Hispanic parents may stress the importance of following societal rules and norms without actually understanding the rules and norms. Parents of Hispanic adolescent girls, who are involved in the juvenile justice system, must be educated on the integration of their family values into the values of American society. This integration would help to reduce the strain that their daughters experience on a daily basis; as such a strain could lead to suicidal ideation and delinquent behavior. Hence, this inclusion would hopefully lead to decreased suicidal ideation, self-destructive tendencies, depression and delinquent behavior in this population.

Research Limitations

This research study examines the influence of race among juvenile females between the ages of 10 and 17 years in the Texas juvenile justice system. All juveniles under the age of 10 years were considered in this research. This was so as juveniles under the age of 10 years were more likely not to be charged in juvenile court with a criminal charge. Juveniles who were over the age of 17 years were generally sent to adult court for processing in lieu of juvenile court. This research also included only females and not males. These females were from the largest county in the state of Texas, Harris. The sample of females in Harris County served as a good representative sample for all the counties in Texas, as Harris County encompassed rural and city populations. Furthermore, this county was chosen as it was also the third most populous county in the United States and it consisted of 29 percent of the total population under the age of 18 years old, according to the United States Census (United States Census, 2008).

The problem with utilizing a population of females in Harris County, Texas was that it may not be representative of other juveniles in other states, such as upstate New York. This research solely focused on a population of juvenile females who were in the juvenile justice system in Texas. Harris County was singled out in this research for two reasons. First, this was primarily due to the inaccuracy of the data that other counties in Texas reported. Harris County had the most complete data out of any county in Texas. Second, the county's, as the most populous county in Texas, offender demographics were consistent with the rest of the state. Hence, further research may be needed to include studies that would consider the above geographic limitations.

Moreover, this research utilized only four control variables within this analysis. In order to increase the statistical significance of the regression outcomes more control variables were needed. However, this research was commissioned to examine these five variables only. These variables were selected because some of the data that were collected from the TJPC were missing. In collecting the data from all 254 counties, not all the variables were accurately reported.

This research was also limited to the MAYSI-2 screening instrument. This research was built on the foundation of this instrument. The self-reporting nature of the data also presented some limitations. Self-report data faced the following issues such as the use of inconsistent instruments, inaccurate reporting, response set, deficient research designs, and poor choice of settings or subjects. Other limitations of self-reported data included telescoping, untruthfulness, and social desirability. The juveniles who took this exam upon intake may have been just telling the facility staff what they wanted to hear. Another limitation in utilizing the MAYSI-2 exam was the nature of the way it was given to juveniles who are incarcerated. This exam was given to juveniles within a few days upon intake into a juvenile justice institutional setting. Administering this test so early in the incarceration period may not have given an accurate reading of juveniles' thoughts about suicide. It is clear from the research that a juvenile was most likely to be suicidal early in the stage of her incarceration due to the uncertainty and fear of being incarcerated (Espinosa et al., 2003).

Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the race factor, and to see if it explained why juveniles in the juvenile justice system may become suicidal. This research further examined the effects family structure and age had on the suicidal ideation variable. This study utilized the MAYSI-2, a brief screening tool utilized by criminal justice professionals, to identify problems with juveniles who have been placed into the juvenile justice system. The results revealed that there was a moderate positive relationship between sexual abuse of juveniles and their suicidal thoughts. Race only had a minor effect on a suicidal juvenile in the juvenile justice system. The findings also indicated that females who were sexually abused may be more likely to report and exhibit suicidal thoughts than non-sexually abused females. The research would indicate that the 9.3 percent of known sexually abused juveniles is probably a lot higher due to failure to report prior abuse history to criminal justice personnel. It was further indicated that an overwhelming majority of these delinquent girls came from blended and extended families. Infuriate analysis also indicated that 17.7 percent of the population of juveniles reported having some form of suicidal tendency prior to entrance into the juvenile justice system. At first glance, 17.7 percent does not seem to be a lot, however when examining this with the overall population, the study found that 1,214 juvenile females in the juvenile justice system report having suicidal tendencies. This is a lot of suicidal at-risk females in only one county in Texas. Suicide is becoming a serious problem, especially with females who have histories of physical, mental and emotional abuse in their pasts.

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Analysis of Gender Responsiveness and Cultural Responsiveness

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Abstract

The theories of gender responsive programming in corrections have focused on the importance of relationships, gender roles, and structural barriers for women (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003). They also included a strong recommendation for cultural responsiveness in recognizing cultural differences among female offenders and providing culturally relevant services (Bloom et al., 2003). However, there was little theoretical or empirical guidance on how to respond when the goals of gender responsive programming conflicted with the culture of female offenders. Findings from a program evaluation of a small, gang intervention program working with Hmong American girls, suggested that in such conflicts, cultural responsiveness became secondary to the primary goal of gender responsiveness. This study documented differences in the definition of gender roles and views on the status of women held by the program and the participants' culture by utilizing content analysis of case records, semi-structured interviews with participants and stakeholders, and observation field notes. Analysis found no attempt by the program to assist the participants in understanding the cultural conflicts they were experiencing within their families or as recent immigrants. Implications of this programmatic tension were discussed and suggestions were made for future program administrators and practitioners looking for community resources that were both gender and culturally responsive.

Gender responsive programs in Corrections are relatively new although they have been advocated in the literature for several decades. A synthesis of prior literature suggests an operational definition of gender responsive programming for females as "creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of girls' and women's lives and addresses the issues of the girl and women participants" (Advisory Task Force on Female Offenders [ATFFO], 2002, p. 1). Gender responsive programs are holistic in creating physically and emotionally safe environments that address issues of girls and women in culturally relevant ways (Bloom & Covington, 1998; Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind, 1998; Morash, Bynum, & Koons, 1998; Owen & Bloom, 1998). Cultural responsiveness means "recognizing, acknowledging, and honoring differences and similarities, within the varying cultural communities that the girls and women represent in our systems, it also mean[s] that administrators and direct service staff reflect the ethnicity, race and cultures of the populations served" (ATFFO, 2002, p. 1).

Data presented here are from an empirical investigation assessing the extent a small, girl-gang intervention program was gender responsive. Findings document that many characteristics of gender responsiveness are present but the investigation found serious problems in the program's attempt to be culturally responsive. The present analysis focuses on this conflict between gender responsive and culturally responsive.

Most of the participants in the program under investigation are Hmong Americans. The program is located in an urban setting where there are more than 60,000 Hmong Americans whose families emigrated to the U.S. from Southeastern Asia. Most of the girls in the program were born in the U.S., but their parents were not. As will be discussed later in more detail, Hmong Americans gender roles are clearly differentiated and these ascriptions are quite different from those of White, middle class Americans. Yet, much of the content of gender responsive programming, as is the case for the program under study, is based on this latter culture.

The program was found to be gender responsive in terms of exposing delinquent girls to successful female role models, empowerment, self discovery, and promoting respect for diverse cultures. However, there were problems in that it was not holistic. It provided general information about violence against females, but did not provide resources to assist the girls in responding to the violence in their own lives. It also emphasized empowerment of females, but did not include any discussion of their troubled relationships with boyfriends and family members. Additionally, it included no assistance to the participants on issues of being from immigrant families. There was little in the program that addressed the girls' culture which was related to all of these problems in their lives. As exemplified by the following quote, at

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least one participant was experiencing significant troubles in understanding the cultural conflicts within her own life; "My parents are Hmong, they're from Laos. They don't understand how things are here in America. They don't realize that I'm an American, I'm White" (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 4).

As will be seen, there was little in this intervention program that addressed either the role of females in the Hmong culture or the conflicts experienced by these immigrant families living in the United States. Analyses find that this is primarily because the program does not agree with the definition of the female gender role in the culture of the participants. As a result, cultural responsiveness is dropped. There is little in the literature that provides guidance for how to resolve conflicts between gender responsiveness and cultural responsiveness. Some might suggest that the two cannot coexist, but here, it is argued that there are ways to integrate both approaches. Suggestions for guidelines that could help this particular program and others are provided in the conclusions. Also included are suggestions to help professionals who are looking for placements for their young female clients.

Gender Responsive Services in Corrections

Prior to the 1990s, there were few discussions about developing specific services for adolescent and adult female offenders. The assumption was that whatever worked for boys and men would be appropriate for girls and women. Through the efforts of many practitioners and scholars, it has been established that the needs of female offenders are different from males and, therefore, intervention programs should also be different.

One well-documented difference was that the socialization of girls and women focused on relationships (Chodorow, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee [IAFS], 1995; Miller, 1986; Miller, 1991). Research documented that, in addition to attending to relationships, gender responsive services needed to take into account socially defined gender roles and structural barriers encountered by girls and women (Chesney-Lind, 1998), and specifically provide females with opportunities to improve their economic potential (Bloom et al., 2003). The field continued to develop to include focuses on empowerment and developing healthy relationships (Bloom, 1998; Bloom & Covington, 1998; Bloom et al., 2003).

A synthesis of the literature revealed that gender responsive programming should be holistic in addressing the inter-linkages of all aspects of the female offender's life (e.g., physical, emotional, financial, and psychological) (Bloom 2003; Bloom et al., 2003; Maniglia, 2003). For instance, a program that only focused on providing counseling services and did not address economic barriers for girls and women would not be effective at improving their chances for success (Maniglia, 2003).

It has been found that the pathways of females entering the criminal justice system are different than those of males. It was also found that the factors important for females included economic marginalization, drug/alcohol abuse, oppressive/dysfunctional relationships, and physical and sexual abuse (Bloom et al., 2003; Owen, 1998; Richie, 1996). Effective interventions must address these factors. Thus, for example, as many female offenders have been victims of abuse, gender responsive programs for girls and women must occur in settings that are physically and emotionally safe for the female participants (Bloom, 2003).

Finally, as is particularly relevant to the present study, it was stated that because females' lives were affected by both their culture and their gender; girls and women of color had different experiences of their gender and different experiences in institutions (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). Therefore, gender responsive programs must also be culturally responsive and make every attempt to provide specific cultural resources available in ethnic communities (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko; Serious and Chronic Juvenile Offenders Report [SCJOR], 2000).

With clarification of what gender responsive programs should look like, more state departments of correction are beginning to consider such a paradigm shift, but both practitioners and scholars call for more empirical evaluation of these programs (Bloom, 1998). However, it has been noted that the lack of mature programs and the extremely small proportion of offenders who are females (making it difficult to conduct quantitative studies), suggest concrete evidence will be slow in coming (SCJOR, 2000).

Nevertheless, while there are fairly specific models for gender responsive services even if empirical evaluations are slowly being collected, the variety of cultures represented in correctional systems and the newness of this philosophy results in few, if any, conceptual frameworks on which to simultaneously build a gender and culturally responsive program. Culturally responsive programming is a necessary component in gender responsive services. Yet, as will be seen, it cannot be assumed that this goal will automatically be accomplished or that the process of balancing these two objectives will be simple.

Cultural Responsive Services in Corrections

Like gender responsiveness services, there has been a call in the criminal justice system for making programs culturally responsive (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). More recently, in its more recent report, (Amicus, 2010) listed culturally competent programming as a suggested standard when evaluating gender responsive programming. Despite the advocacy for such approaches, there has been limited evaluation of the impact of such programs and there was little description and evaluation of which specific com-

ponents should be included in a correctional intervention that was labeled, culturally responsive.

Research that exists is spread throughout a variety of criminal justice contexts and little focuses on females. For example, Weller, Martin, and Lederach (2001) found that needs of Latino families in Family Dispute Courts were different from Anglo families. Terrell and Terrell (1984) found that African-Americans were resistant to mental health counseling dependant on the race of the counselor as a result of their views on cultural mistrust. De Leon, Kressel, and Melnick (1997) found that culturally appropriate treatment for addictions improves retention in therapeutic community programs. Similarly, Beckerman and Fontana (2001) discovered that specialized treatment programs for African-American men in Drug Court increased participant retention. Day, Davey, Wanganeen, and Howells (2006) found that failure to acknowledge the historical and political context of Aboriginal men in Australia promoted resistance to treatment.

There is limited research identifying content of effective culturally responsive programming with a few exceptions. In the study cited above, Beckerman and Fontana (2001) reported program effectiveness increased for African-American men in Drug Court when programming included attention to the role of male in the community, spiritual growth and need to master core life skills related to employability. In their study, Wooldredge, Hartman, Latessa, and Holmes (1994) found that programming for African-American boys that focused on improving self-esteem and developing a sense of community had no effect in reducing crime.

A particular interest of the present study was research that focused both on females and cultural responsiveness in correctional programming. Thao, Arifuku, and Nuñez (2003) evaluated the effectiveness of a program that addressed both and involves multiple ethnic groups of girls. The Reaffirming Young Sisters' Excellence (RYSE), of Alameda County, California was created in response to the rapidly growing number of girls in the justice system. The program was developed from a predominantly African-American cultural orientation and most of the staff members were African-American with some being able to speak Spanish. Programming focused on teaching life-skills and leadership training; special events were all organized from African-American perspectives. The goal was to reduce crime, but evaluators found that, overall, the recidivism rates of girls attending this program were no different from girls receiving traditional probation. However, controlling for race, it was found that African-American girls in the program fared much better than African-American girls not in the program. The program was found not to impact girls of other racial/ethnic groups. This study supports the value of culturally responsive programming and highlights the challenges when programs contain more than one cultural group.

Caggins (1993) argued that culturally responsive programming must address many dimensions of culture; including values and norms, beliefs and attitudes, types of relationships, communication and language, sense of self and space, appearance and dress, work habits and practices, as well as, food and eating habits. Others have argued that the criminal justice system has been used to ensure the oppression of many cultures within the U.S. (Chomsky, 2003; Street, 2003). Studies of crime found that the domination of White culture in the U.S. was related to criminal behavior of other cultures (e.g., Austin & Irwin, 2001; Inciardi, 1992; Street, 2003). Therefore, we would suggest adding this understanding to culturally responsive programming.

While gender responsive programming and culturally responsive programming reflect positive changes from the White dominated, male-centered historical practices, there is tension between feminism and multiculturalism at a theoretical level outside of correctional programming. In 1999, an edited text entitled, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Okin, 1999) analyzed how multiculturalism may be counter-productive for women because many cultures and religions oppressed women. She speculated that a commitment to a philosophy of group rights, to all minority groups, may sanction the continued oppression of girls and women in those cultures.

Yet, other scholars disagreed and asserted that this perspective was heavily influenced by feminism entrenched in western culture. Pollit (1999) argued the focus on feminism over culture was simply an attempt to disregard non-Western societies. She explained, "In its demand for equality for women, feminism sets itself in opposition to virtually every culture on earth" (Pollit, 1999, p. 27). Brah (2010) argued that sisterhood was not global; in that, the issues that faced women of color were extremely different than those described by White feminists. Collins (2010) argued that the definition of a Black feminist was not simply a change of color but a response to a different historical context of oppression. This debate between feminism and multiculturalism, or more specifically, gender and culturally responsive programming, is a primary dilemma for the case study under investigation where a program developed by a White feminist is directed towards Hmong American girls.

The Hmong

The program studied was designed to be gender responsive for all girls but the majority of the participants referred by their probation officers were Hmong Americans. The Hmong are an ancient Asian ethnic group who lived in China at least 5,000 years ago (Yang, 2001). After centuries of oppression, including the destruction of their written language, the Hmong moved to the mountains of Laos and, later, many became allies of the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. With the

Fall of Saigon, the political and military elite were evacuated to the U.S. comprising the first wave of Hmong immigrants (Julian, 2004). Most of the others fled to refugee camps in Thailand where they lived under desperate conditions until they were allowed to immigrate to France, Canada, and the U.S around the year 2000 (Julian, 2004). This second wave of immigrants had suffered considerable hardships in the U.S., including lack of transferable job skills, limited education, language barriers, and cultural differences (Grigoleit, 2006). Over the past 10 years, many Hmong have been progressing through the U.S. educational system, gaining economic benefits, and becoming a part of the U.S. political systems (Yang, 2001). However, the families whose daughters participated in the program evaluated here, members of the second wave of immigration, had not yet gained these benefits.

Historically, the Hmong had strongly differentiated gender roles where much of the power was with the males. They believed in polygamous marriages, early marriage for females, and authoritarian discipline of children and women (Hang, 1997; Grigoleit, 2006; Lee, 2001). Many Hmong Americans have moved away from this characterization of gender roles (Grigoleit, 2006), but there are still those who have not. In the U.S., there are Hmong husbands who restrict the movement of their wives, making them stay in their homes and attend to their families (Hang, 1997; Yang, 2001). The family and clan is extremely important to the Hmong, more so than with ties to outsiders (Armstrong, 2000; Fadiman, 1998; Koltyk, 1998). Also, many females are victims of violence within these homes (Yang, 2001). The girls participating in the program being studied were from these types of families.

There has been some research documenting the conflicts between Hmong American teenage girls and their families. Many parents attempt to maintain traditional control over their daughters to ensure the continuation of their culture while living in a foreign land (Hang, 1997; Yang, 2001). Also, parents do not approve of the freedom and independence of teenage daughters in the dominant U.S. culture (Lee, 2001; Yang, 2001). The Hmong American daughters have stated that they are caught in the middle of trying to juggle their parents' expectations and with the culture they are exposed to through non-Hmong friends and classmates (Hang; Lee). As will be seen, the Hmong American girls in this study experienced similar dilemmas and, yet, little was done to assist them with these struggles.

Method

Sample

The program. To protect the anonymity of those studied; we will refer to the program under the pseudonym of Togetherness House (TH). TH is a small, non-profit organization located in a mid-western, urban community. Programming at TH was designed to assist between six to 10 teenage girls on probation who were, or had been, gang members. At the time of data collection, most of the girls in the program already had successfully completed out-of-home treatment programs and were sent to TH for continued assistance and support while they were returning to live with their families. The girls were between 14 to 16 years of age.

At TH, girls were required to attend programming every week day after school. Activities lasted between 2-3 hours on weekdays, although frequently there were weekend activities where attendance was mandatory. Program activities included tutoring, group counseling, artistic expression, community volunteerism, and visiting with professional women.

TH was created and is operated by the director; a White woman with a degree in Ethnic Studies. She was the only full-time staff person. An ethnically diverse board of directors helped to guide the program. Many were employed within the criminal justice system. In addition to the director, there was a part-time tutor, a part-time book keeper, and a part-time translator (the only Hmong American affiliated with the program).

Due to the geographical area of the country where this program is located the ethnic identities of program participants were somewhat unique. During the history of the program, there were a few African-American girls, a few Latinas, and one girl originally from Africa. However, the majority of the girls were Hmong Americans. We knew little about the criminal background of these participants as our focus was assessing the extent of gender responsiveness in the program. Nonetheless, by the nature of their participation, they had been defined as gang members, had been in out-of-home treatment at least once, and, based on the stories they later shared with us, had brothers and boyfriends who either were or had been in prison.

Design and Procedure

This research was to determine if the programming at TH was gender and culturally responsive. This was not an outcome evaluation determining if the programming was effective in altering the behavior of its participants. Rather, it was a process evaluation comparing programmatic practices with established recommendations for working with female offenders.

Data collection. With the small number of participants in this program, quantitative methods would be inappropriate. In the literature it has been suggested that because most corrections programs for delinquent girls typically have small numbers, it may be inappropriate to evaluate them (SCJOR, 2000). The researchers disagreed, because all programs needed evaluation to document successful strategies, as well as, those that were problematic. The researchers suggested that intensive, qualitative case analysis, using multiple methods of data

collection, could be extremely effective in studying programs with small numbers of participants.

To conduct this comprehensive evaluation, multiple methods of data collection were used: content analysis of documents, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and observation/participation observation. Many documents were reviewed by the researchers including monthly activity plans and reports, individual case notes, grant applications, time-lines, and program brochures. No financial reports were reviewed nor were outcomes of the program as these were not part of the original focus of the evaluation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with many individuals tied to the program. This included the Program Director, program staff, program participants, board members, and probation officers who had referred participants to the program. A total of 13 formal interviews were conducted and each typically lasted about one hour.

Informal conversations with the Director and participants were supplemented by the observation/participant observation methods of data collection. The two principle researchers spent considerable time, individually and collectively, at TH and engaged in activities with program participants. The researchers attended many other activities with the group such as ceramic painting, volunteering at a Weed and Seed after school program, ethnic dinners, and a field trip to visit a woman at her place of employment. The researchers also just hung out at TH, especially during tutoring times. The researchers spent much time informally talking with participants, program staff, and the Director and maintained field notes of all observations. On one occasion, program participants and the Director visited our community, touring our university campus, joining us in boating and swimming at a nearby lake, and having a cook-out and sleep-over. During the interviews, be they formal interviews or informal conversations during field observations, all girls queried appeared quite frank in expressing their opinions; thus, increasing the accuracy of these findings.

Data analysis. Formal interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Data from these transcripts were analyzed looking for common themes and patterns. Field notes were analyzed, similarly, and content analysis was performed on organization documents. All findings reported were substantiated by either multiple informants or by multiple sources of data.

Results

Gender Responsive Services

Using Bloom's (1998) evaluation model, the researchers analyzed the program's theoretical foundations, the backgrounds of stakeholders, program staff and clients, program components, the utilization of community resources, and the program's environment.

The program is housed in a safe, well-maintained condominium located near the neighborhoods where the participants lived. The girls traveled by school bus after school each day to this location. It was a pleasant, safe environment where the participants had helped to decorate.

The researchers observed many indicators that TH focused on concerns of females, both in the theoretical foundations and in actual practices. This was supported by interviews with stakeholders. As one probation officer remarked, "[There are] not a lot of other resources that provide that level of advocacy for girls." This same individual also noted that emotional support and role modeling was consistently provided via the program. A different probation officer stated:

I really wanted them to be around [Name of the Director] because I think that she has a real good idea of what the resources are-that she has a real good idea of what the resources are-that are out there for the girls. I think she relates really well to them. I also know that she runs a really tight ship, so she holds them accountable, but she also offers these girls things that they otherwise would never have been exposed to.

Another stakeholder summarized the program as:

I think the philosophy is just to empower these girls and to expose them to positive influences whether it's with people they go and see or the field trips or the activities. So I would say, I definitely think it is specifically geared towards nurturing young girls and it is specific in that sense.

Evaluation of the curriculum, as documented in both lesson plans and field observations, found many opportunities for empowerment, self-discovery, cultural diversity, socialization, and structural success. Some of the gender appropriate interventions the researchers observed included exposure to restorative justice circles, conflict resolution, introduction to the notion of volunteerism, development of cultural competence skills, appreciation for creative expression, introduction to women professionals, and exposure to women role models. Analysis of client logs revealed a long list of female focused activities; including participating in volunteering at a wheelchair basketball tournament, helping to create a sexual harassment brochure, talking with a female mechanic about her profession, participating in discussions on alternatives to violence, and attending presentations conducted by women professionals. In many respects, TH met criteria of being gender responsive. Even the girls defined the Director as pro woman. They said she emphasized the belief that girls are great and can accomplish anything.

Cultural Responsiveness Services

This program did much to expose the participants to a wide range of cultures and cultural activities. Programming included participating in Hmong Peace Circles, attending a Nigerian play, visiting a Latino Cultural Center, and participating in discussions about racism.

One participant stated: "They [program staff] try to explore every culture and they don't make judgments on them-they handle different cultures good-they try to involve cultures in what we're doing."

Stake holders and probation officers also thought TH was culturally responsive and indicated that the cultural component is one they most highly valued. Examples of their reflections are:

I think [Name of Director] has made a concerted effort. I think she was concerned initially at least having a group of particular children from a background or heritage and wanted to expand on that. I think she's done a good job.

There were a lot of different activities. They got exposed to a variety of cultures. I like culturally specific stuff. [It is an] important ingredient for Hmong girls because they really are living in both worlds...more so than the African-American girls.

Through the programming calendars and field notes the researchers documented that the Director spent a substantial portion of the programming time teaching the girls to respect other cultures and to be proud of their own heritage. For example, she once encouraged a girl to explain to us how soccer games are important cultural gatherings for the Hmong community. Another time, the researchers were invited to a diversity dinner where each girl made a dish that was typical of her culture. However, through the course of data collection the researchers heard critiques of the program.

The Conflicts

As my mother says, I'll never get a husband if I don't know how to clean a chicken. She wants me to go to the farm with her and learn to clean chickens. I say, "Mom, if I want a chicken, I'll get one at the grocery store." She says, "Men don't like frozen chicken. You have to come with me and learn how to clean chickens." I don't go. (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 7).

After hearing one participant make this statement, the researchers realized there was nothing in the program that could assist this girl with her struggles of living in two cultures. To make sense out of the above quote, we consulted with a few of our male, Hmong American college students. They explained that chicken tasted the same no matter how prepared, but when a male is looking for a wife, selecting one that knew the traditional methods of food preparation was a means for the male to honor his own family. Nonetheless, there was nothing in the TH program to help the girls make sense of this or of other struggles of living in two cultures. There were other examples of this void in the programming.

The Director told us she frequently observed participants translating between their Hmong parents and their English speaking probation officer. All of the involved adults realized that the translations were inaccurate, but, apparently, there was little they could do about it. The program made no effort to intervene in this situation.

The part-time tutor stated that he wondered why the Director took the girls to visit universities when most of them were not passing any of their junior high school courses. He questioned if the program was raising false expectations for its participants.

Several of the girls told us that their brothers, cousins, and boyfriends were in prison. They said they missed these people, but, in the program, there was no discussion about the status of these males in their lives. From the Director, the researchers learned that when the girls earned money, as part of the program, they were paid with cash, as none of the participants or their families used banks. The Director told us that often, when the boyfriends would pick up the girls from the program, she observed them giving their boyfriends all of their recently earned money. The researchers found no indication that these behaviors were discussed in the programming of TH.

One participant told us they were not allowed to talk about boys while at TH. When the Director was queried about this she laughed saying there was no such rule. However, she added that while many girls in this age bracket spent an enormous amount of time thinking and talking about boys, she wanted the girls she worked with to think about themselves and their own lives. She found it humorous that one had interpreted this as not being allowed to talk about boys while at TH.

There was no family involvement in the activities of TH. This was somewhat unusual for a program working with juvenile delinquents in general and even more divergent from gender responsive programming for females where relationships were deemed extremely important. Yet, families were not a part of the programming at TH.

As described earlier, this program was extremely successful at exposing the participants to diverse cultures and promoting self-pride in one's own culture. However, in contrast to the guidelines of a culturally responsive program, there was little involvement of the Hmong community in the TH program. There were no Hmong board members, even though the researchers had interviewed a Hmong, female probation officer who had a client in the program. This suggested there was at least one professional who could have been on the Board. One of the part-time employees was a Hmong woman, hired as a translator. The Director often complained about this person stating she took "too much time" translating things to the parents (she was paid an hourly wage). Early on in our observations of the program the researchers suspected the translator was not simply translating words but explaining the whole concept of the program to the Hmong parents. The Director never viewed nor actively utilized this translator as a cultural interpreter.

When the researchers asked the Director about the lack of involvement with the families she explained that she saw the families and their culture as sources of prob-

lems for the girls. She provided multiple examples. For instance, she stated that on one occasion she received a phone call from a girl in the middle of the night asking her to come to their home because she was in a physical fight with her sister and they were hurting each other. When the Director got there, the father, in attempt to stop their fighting, was hitting both of them with a telephone cord. The Director received permission to take the participant to her own home for the night. When she returned in the morning, she informed the father that what he was doing was illegal and if he did it again, she would report him to the police. She described how many others had been beaten by their parents or male siblings and how most had been raped multiple times as part of the initiation to become a Hmong gang member.

The Director stated her program was strictly for the girls. She did not want to work with the families because they were abusive of the girls. She was close to the girls in her program and was extremely protective of them. Indeed, the researchers saw many examples where the girls displayed strong trust in the Director. Nevertheless, while the Director instilled a sense of respect for diversity among the girls, as well as, concrete knowledge about other cultures, she refused to include family members in the program. This was due to their use of violence and how the culture defined the status of females as subservient. At no time did the researchers observe or learn from interviews that the Director specifically criticized anyone's family or anyone's culture. However, with her absolute focus on the girls as individuals, she did not include any programming on helping the girls with their struggles with their own families, their boyfriends, nor the related problems of living in two cultures.

There were other indicators that the Director did not like the role of women in the Hmong culture. She talked about how the fathers made all of the decisions for the families. She told us about how difficult it was for the Hmong female juvenile probation officer to work with the Hmong fathers of her clients. One father walked out of the room when the probation officer was visiting and another spat at her during a home visit. The Director talked about how poorly the younger males treated their sisters and girlfriends. While the Director was very open with us about her disapproval, little was said in front of the clients about the role of women in their culture. Instead, she provided much information about how women could strive for any profession, inferring that these options were available to her participants, as well.

Discussion

Togetherness House provides many services to its participants that are consistent with gender responsiveness. It provides a physically safe environment where issues of female empowerment, self-discovery, and success at school are promoted. Participants are exposed to a wide variety of female professionals and they are exposed to a wide range of career options. Also, there are many activities that promote cultural awareness and celebration of diversity. However, there are several components of gender responsiveness that are missing; it does not adequately address the girls' exposure to violence, it does not attend to important relationships in the girls' lives, it does not provide any assistance for the participants who are living in immigrant families, and as such, it is not holistic. These deficiencies are the result of the program not being culturally responsive.

The Director's concerns about the girls' exposure to violence in their homes are valid. As noted in the literature described earlier, exposure to violence is extremely common in the lives of female offenders and this is especially common among younger female offenders. High rates of violence are often found among first generation of immigrant groups and besides this, within the Hmong culture there are norms about the legitimate use of violence that differ from legal definitions in the U.S. (Fadiman, 1998). The girls in this program experienced violence in their homes that needed to be stopped.

Programming at TH includes education about non-violent conflict resolution and the illegitimacy of violence in personal relationships. Nonetheless, there is much more this program could do for the girls about the violence they were experiencing. TH could link the girls to community services for counseling and guidance, it could help them prepare a plan for future crises (however, it is noteworthy that at least one girl, when faced with a beating by her father, trusted the Director enough to call her for help), and it could provide them a place to talk about the violence they experience. Yet, because the Director did not include the families in any programming and possibly she did not want to vocalize criticism of the participants' parents and family, there was no programming that responded directly to the violence in the girls' lives.

This program places little focus on the girls' relationships with others. While the Director is aware of problems the girls encounter in their relationships with boyfriends, there is no place in this program for the girls to speak about these issues or receive assistance. The girls perceive that they cannot talk about boys at TH. Also, there is little discussion about relationships within the families, be they positive or problematic because the Director does not like how the girls are treated by family members and, more specifically, she does not like the role of women in this culture. Related, there is no involvement of families in this program. All of these factors with the restricted programming on cultural responsiveness.

There was no programming that assisted the girls in understanding the role of women in their culture. The Director was critical of this role but she did not want to criticize the girls' culture. Thus, she basically ignored the culture, even though the option of ignoring their culture was not one available to the young participants in this program. If this aspect of the program were evaluated using the well-known Cultural Competence Con-

tinuum developed by the Director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association (Cross, 1989) it would be categorized as cultural incapacity. On a scale from Cultural Destruction (being intentionally destructive of other cultures) to Advanced Cultural Competence (holds culture in high esteem), this aspect of the program would earn a poor distinction of cultural incapacity lacking in ability to help people of color.

The role of women in any culture is complex and even though outsiders might be critical of some dimensions, there are others that can be honored. For example, the girls' mothers could have been invited to help with the diversity dinner, grandmothers could have been asked to teach their traditional needlepoint skills, or a Hmong community member could have been asked to join the Board of Directors. Finally, problematic aspects of the familial relationships experienced by the girls could have been addressed in the programming, or referrals to other agencies could have been made.

TH did not address any of the problems the girls' experienced having parents who are immigrants and their difficulties in living in two cultures. The researchers learned of multiple incidents of dilemmas and it was apparent that the Director knew of some of these, but there was nothing in the programming that provided any assistance to the girls. For example, in the situation where the young girl was translating between her parents and her probation officer, the Director knew of a translator, the one employed by her program, and, yet, she did not offer this information to any of the involved parties. She appeared to define this as outside of the focus of her program.

The lack of involvement in assisting the girls with the violence in their lives, not including a focus on important relationships in the girls' lives, and not being culturally responsive all indicate that the TH programming is not holistic. Simply exposing the girls' to strong role models, alternative careers for females and celebrations of diverse cultures is not sufficient. This program does not address the complex and difficult components of the girls' lives and does nothing to help them understand the structural processes that operate against their own success. To be gender responsive a program must address all aspects of females' lives and TH did not do this. This may explain a statement made to us by one of the participants in referring to the Director, "…(she) is definitely 'pro woman' but she does not have a clue about what my life is really like" (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 10).

As with TH, programs may have some innovative, desired programming, but unless the entire program addresses the gender and culture of the participants, the program, at best, may not be relevant to the lives of its participants. There is a possibility that it could have more damaging consequences.

The missing components of gender responsive programming at TH may cause the following negative consequences for its participants: a) the girls may be confused about the mixed messages of being told that all should be respectful of each other's culture when their own culture does not receive this treatment; b) the isolation of the girls from their families and culture may create more problems for them, as this is directly contradictory to their culture where the family and the clan are considered more important than the individual; c) the girls receive little support or advice on how to handle conflicts (sometimes violent ones) they are experiencing in their homes except to be pulled out; d) they receive no information about how to cope with being from immigrant families and having to live in two cultures; and e) the girls may perceive subtle racist insinuations that their culture is bad.

The girls in this program have difficult lives and have engaged in serious criminal behavior. The deficits of this program are related to female criminality (Amicus, 2010; Bloom, 2003) and may have the impact of increasing these girls delinquency. The program at TH almost implies that there is nothing that can be done about the problems within their families and, therefore, the girls should adapt to the gender role ascriptions of the White, middle class.

Implications

Conflicts such as cultural differences in defining female roles have no easy solutions. There is much academic literature attempting to provide theoretical solutions to conflicts between multiculturalism and gender. However, for the purposes of creating programs for delinquent girls, it is useful to view culture and gender as two separate continuums that have multiple points of intersection. These intersections are problematic, not because they are unexpected, but because they are inevitable. Based on the current study and literature on the topic, the following are suggestions on how to prepare for times when there will be conflict between gender and cultural responsiveness.

Focus on internationally recognized human rights. This refers to international treaties in mission statements for correctional programs. An-Na'im (1999) argued that a focus on human rights might assist in solving the debate between feminism and multiculturalism. The author stated, "I say that all cultures must be held to the same standards not only of gender equality but also of all other human rights" (p. 61).

Promote safety. From a human rights perspective, violence must be stopped. While this should be a guiding principle, it must be recognized that at times cultures will differ on definitions of physical injury, such as fasting, scarring, and genital mutilation. Correctional programs need to work with their communities to determine cultural meanings and also refer to internationally agreed upon prohibitions.

Encourage participants' voices. At first glance, this suggestion may seem difficult for any correctional program where the history of the discipline is exactly the opposite; convicted offenders are told what to do.

This is further complicated within programs, such as the one studied here, where adolescents are the participants (an age bracket where many teenagers profess that no one understands what their lives are like), and from immigrant families that may not be well-informed about norms and resources available to them. In this study, when asked, the girls were quite frank that the Director did not understand their home lives and did not understand their cultures. Perhaps, if their voices were a part of the program development programmatic changes could have been made earlier.

Collaborate with community members. One possible way to relieve or reduce the tension between the empowerment goals of gender responsive programming and the respect for cultures different from the dominant population is to include the participation of community members. It was noted that strong Hmong women lived and worked in the community inhabited by many of the program participants. The Director would have been wise to seek the advice and guidance of women from the Hmong culture; that is cultural interpreters, to assist her in creating a program that would reap the benefits of both feminism and multiculturalism. Correctional programs, both in the community and in institutions, would be well served to pull from cultural resources in the community; such an approach would be consistent with a strengths based model and evidence based practices.

Recognize and abandon White privilege. Input from program participants and adult women from various ethnic groups, combined with recognition of oppression and the development of trusted relationships between community members and corrections professionals would have a profound effect. This process would ultimately require professionals to tolerate and support program interventions that minimally make no sense to them and more likely, they would have to engage in practices that lack relevance for them. This is where trusted relationships between individuals of diverse cultures would be critical, as well as, the firm establishment of common goals.

The conflict between gender responsiveness and cultural responsiveness does not require viewing the resolution as a dichotomy, as an either/or choice. The researchers recommend practitioners strive for knowledge of the various cultures represented by program participants and work toward developing programs that are responsive to the needs of girls and women from any culture.

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Africentrism and Africentric Rituals: Their Role in Jamaican Male Motivation to Pursue Higher Education

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Abstract

This academic research presents the case for Africentrism and its attendant rituals for the African Diaspora to aid in the motivation and inspiration factor in the male's choice to pursue higher education in Jamaica. The paper discussed Africentric rites of passage against the background of pre-emancipation and post-emancipation education in Jamaica. It also analyzed the current educational system for male nationals along with the implications for applying Africentrism to theories and practice of education for male students. The major concern precipitating this study was the low levels of male enrolment in institutions of higher learning, as the female population far surpasses that of the male in most disciplines at the tertiary level. The conditions contributing to the phenomenon were traced and examined to determine whether there existed a problem of cultural identity, contributing to the male's resistance and lack of interest in pursuing education at the pre-university level. Sources of history, educational theories, gender development and Africentrism were explored to conclude that rites of passage could in fact contribute to males' educational development at higher levels of education. The issues presented leads to a discussion of the possible purveyors of this type of renewed system of education to assist in preparing the male learner for higher education.

In a general context, it has been identified and recorded in various studies and texts that men have special needs in comparison with women; these needs affect males' access and utilization of educational provisions within the island of Jamaica. Consequently, males have specific educational needs which must be considered in a 21st Century context. This is in order to achieve an understanding of the reasons behind men seeking or not seeking to pursue higher degrees in any discipline. Recent cries over the last decade and a half contain the truth of the phenomenon that males are not being represented at higher levels of education at the tertiary level.

The gender breakdown of enrolment figures at the oldest degree-granting institution in the West Indies, University of the West Indies, demonstrates that up to 1980, "more men than women graduated from the traditional 'male' faculties of agriculture, engineering, natural sciences and medicine" (Hamilton, 2001, para. 7). After this period, it has been recorded that women moved into the majority of these faculties. It is noteworthy that it is only in the realm of the last 15 years that other degree granting institutions have been established, providing more options for the degree seeking individual (Miller, n.d.). Therefore, this research paper seeks to determine if a major contributing cause of men's lack of motivation to keep pace with their female counterparts, in the pursuit of higher education, stems from a lack of a clearly

defined system of Africentric customs and rituals, which may act as precursors to the educational development of the Jamaican male.

There has been much debate, in the Jamaican public arena, regarding the failing state of education from primary through to tertiary education, and the Jamaican candidates' readiness for pursuit of higher studies. Each year, around March (the time when the Grade Six Achievement Tests [GSAT] are administered nationwide) and June (when the results of GSAT, CXC (CXC-Caribbean Examinations Council) are published) the debate ensues on the quality of education provided to our children, the quality of teachers, the quality of assessments being administered to our students, teachers' pay and the issues continue, unabated. The debaters from all corners of the society point to the glaring consequences of an inadequate education system resulting in the low rate of male enrolment in local universities. Thus, this research is subdivided into five main categories; a) the case for Africentrism and its attendant rituals for the African Diaspora, b) definitions of Africentric rites of passage, c) Pre-emancipation education in Jamaica, d) post-emancipation education in Jamaica, and e) current educational System for male nationals and implications for applying Africentrism to theories and practice of education for male students.

The Encyclopedia of World problems and Human Potential (1976), in seeking to address the world problems, have sought to identify specific background units that contributed to the state of anti-social human affairs and conditions:

In the past, much effort has gone into the focus on seemingly isolated world problems, such as unemployment, boredom, endangered species, desertification or corruption. Work on the newly published Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential has now shifted its focus to the hunt for complex networks and even vicious cycles of problems. A cycle is a chain of problems, with each aggravating the next-with the last looping back to aggravate the first in the chain. The more obvious loops may be composed of only three or four problems. Far less obvious are those composed of seven or more.

An example of a vicious cycle is: *Alienation -> Youth gangs -> Neighborhood control by criminals -> Psychological stress of urban environment -> Substance abuse -> Family breakdown -> Alienation*. Such cycles are vicious because they are self-sustaining. Identifying them is also no easy matter. Like the search for strange particles in physics, much computer time is required to track through the aggravating chains linking problems. (para. 6-7)

The fact that studies are now being dedicated to world problems, to study peculiarities of these problems, should usher us into the serious considerations about our males of the Diaspora as they seek to improve their life status. Each person on the face of the earth is not unaffected by economies of scale, as rich countries become richer and the poor, poorer. Males are no less unaffected. It is stated that of the 10,364 teachers in the school system at the secondary level, only 3,143 of these are males (Francis, 2009). Who teaches our boys in the classroom?

The following questions provided the catalyst for getting an understanding of the Jamaican male's lack of motivation to seek higher learning: (a) Is self motivation an inherited fact of life? (b) Is it instilled by culture, parents, society? (c) Is higher education a worthy pursuit by males in our society? (d) Is economics a factor more so than Africentrism, preventing male educational pursuits? (e) Could Africentrism close the economic barrier faced by males desirous of doing higher studies? (f) Do opportunities truly exist for males to perform at higher levels of education? (g) Is the male self-identity wrapped up in his own understanding of Africentrism? (h) Does the system need to change to include and adopt elements of or all of Africentrism to reach the *marginalized male*?

The Africentric Philosophy

In the application of the Africentric philosophy for the purposes of addressing the research question of ritual and rites affecting the male's choice for higher education in the current Jamaican context, Charles' (2003) comments are duly informative in positing the feature of black identity in the Jamaican scenario. He stated:

Jamaica is also viewed as a Creole society. There is cross fertilization, in that various groups cling to their heritage but find creative interactions in the interested British

political institutions. However there is a constant struggle between the African culture and the 'superior' European culture (Nettleford, 1978). Those who have embraced their African heritage are resisting the challenges of European norms and values, and have become the standard bearers of this culture because the African heritage has been relegated to the bottom of the society (Brodber, 1989). This has occurred because the colonial structure was a deep-rooted state of mind that left legendary scars. This has therefore, presented problems for the newly emerging nations of the Caribbean (Singham, 1968, p. 714).

The above gives rise to the beginning of the answers to the questions raised in the introduction. In essence, it responded to the major question; the divorce between the Jamaican Black male and his roots in forging ahead in academic studies.

The words Africentrism and Afrocentrism are not popularly nor widely used to refer to the embracing of the African heritage in Jamaica, but the terms themselves denote recognition of their role in forming the identity of the Jamaican black male. Phrases heard in the environment, more so in the 1970's, is the term *Pan-African*. Interesting to note in the same research by Charles (2003), an evaluation study of their self worth, Blacks (along with Chinese students) undervalued their importance in relation to other ethnic groups in Jamaica (White, brown skin color). In defining the Black Jamaican male, his relationship to his African heritage and thereby the role of Africentrism/Afrocentrism applied to the context of his adult education must be examined.

As Brookfield (2005) stated, the "philosophical traditions of critical theory"

(p. 274) are decidedly Eurocentric. This theory once applied to adult education, and in particular to the education of the Black Jamaican male, must encounter serious roadblocks, as the theory is based on an ethnicity which has a completely alien experience to his own. He cited Outlaw as saying that "it is contradictory for a theory that purports to help adults liberate themselves from injustice not to address racial oppression" (p. 275). In a review of African American intellectual thought, he further mentioned that there was an outright rejection of Eurocentric perspective of educational critical theory to be replaced with theories drawn from African cultural traditions. Moreover, in citing African American educators Colin and Guy, Brookfield documented their definition of Africentrism as being a "socio-cultural and philosophical perspective that reflects the intellectual traditions of both a culture and a continent; Africentrism is grounded in the seven basic value principles embodied in the Swahili Nguzo Saba" (p. 275). The principles identified in Table 1 are the Seven Principles of KWANZAA (Jackson, 2008). Kwanzaa is a word from the East African language of Kiswahili meaning "the first fruits of the harvest." Kwanzaa celebrations were created by African American in Maulana Karenga, PhD the midst of 1960s Civil Rights movement and is celebrated December 26 to January 1 usually in the United States by peoples of African descent.

Table 1.
The seven principles of Kwanzaa

Umojo - Unity
Ujima- Collective work and responsibility
Nia - Purpose
Imani - Faith
Kujichagulia- self-determination
Ujama- Cooperative economies
Kuuma - creativity

The seven governing principles provided a clear foundation and direction to any student of such ideas. It is imperative to note the thoughts of Outlaw, as cited by Brookfield (2005), that a person's racial history and identity directed how they perceived the world in which they lived and how they reacted and responded to that environment. Additionally, the manner in which they constructed these realities was directly related to their connection to their roots. The Jamaican male's experiential history and his reaction to the world and its demands on him are determined by his own involvement processes of who he is as a result of his African heritage, (as opposed to his slave heritage) and the demands and expectations of that heritage.

In further discussion of the terminology of *Afri*centrism *vis-a-vis Afro*centrism, Brookfield (2005) illustrated Colin and Hayes distinction between both terms. They spoke of the state of Afrocentrism as being that which represented an integrated approach inclusive of inherited European traditions. On the other hand, the former term is as outlined in the definition earlier, with Euro-traditions more or less excluded. With a history of European domination and the current cultural penetration of North America, it would seem that Afrocentrism is the more likely theory to handle in the adult education context of male.

Hunn (2004) spoke to the values of Africentrism as being "harmony, balance, interconnected and oneness" (p. 69). A high value is placed on wholesomeness and oneness of the past and present, unifying all matters of nature, peoples and animals, allowing individuality in the midst of commonality and community. This contrasted with the non-indigenous Eurocentric approach of individualism and competition, which placed itself in a dominant position over all other cultures. Hunn cited Lowry as stating the obvious "Mainstream bias and …Western views of scientism artificially force Chicanos to adhere to the paradigms that do not reflect their knowledge or experience of the world" (p. 66). This is a bias that can clearly be applied to the experience of the Black Jamaican male in negotiating an education system, as that existed in Jamaica, steeped in Eurocentrism (Chevannes, 2005).

Scholar and founder of The Rites of Passage website, Paul Hill, Jr (n.d.), referred to eight, not seven, principles of an Africentric model, *Nguzo Nane*. The eight principles are the same as outlined for Nguzo Sabe with *respect* being the eighth addition. In reference to the failure of programs designed for African American youth, Hill highlighted that the programs found their "genesis in myths created within the mainstream of the American society; (a) success is solely the responsibility of the individual, (b) success is measured in the currencies of wealth and possessions, and (c) that through hard work and ingenuity anyone can become successful."

Each day in our Jamaican landscape we clearly see these *ideologies of success* being perpetuated in the media, from pulpits and in the classroom. The Jamaican male is constantly bombarded with foreign images of success, which have no root in his African related identity. The recently concluded 47th Independence celebration activities, with their grounding in African roots, are relegated to the position of them being entertainment pieces rather than a way of life. It is worthy to note that with the national monument of the park named in honor of the emancipation of slaves in 1838, there was no concerted, continuous mention in the media of the Africentric Adinkra symbols which punctuated the structures in the park located in the capital city, Kingston. It is unlikely that the droves of families visiting the park on a weekly basis are made aware of the symbols which mark their green space, even though signs are present in botanical Latin giving an indication of the trees and plants present in the park.

Hill (n.d.) believed that there were an increased number of African-Americans who strongly felt that the reinstitution of staging rites of passage (see Appendix A), in the growth process of their children, would enable and be the catalyst necessary for them to assimilate into their roles, communities and the world. There is no documentation found that supported such a movement in Jamaica. However, the responses in an informal discussion on the Facebook Internet social community seemed to indicate that Africentric rituals are needed for today's youth. Rite of passage refers to events, ceremonies, or activities which mark transitions from one stage of life to another; e.g., weddings, graduations, First Communion (Catholic).

Africentric Rituals

Hill (2008), in supporting his remarks at a passage of rites ceremony, quoted the Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (1976) as follows:

> The absence of rites of passages leads to a serious breakdown in the process of maturing as a person…the result is that society has not clear expectation of how people should participate in these roles (child, youth, adult, elder) and therefore individuals do not know what is required by society… (p. 1)

Hill (2004) explained rituals as "sign boards of life" while Bird "phenomenologically considered rituals may be defined as culturally transmitted symbolic codes

which are stylized, regularly repeated dramatically structured, authoritatively designed and intrinsically valued" (p. 160). From these definitions, as a Jamaican educator, there is an inability to identify any such ritual which is institutionalized and being practiced on a general basis in education for either male or female. Hill

(2004) further contended that "rites of passages are rituals which symbolize change and paradox within itself" (page 160). Table 2 demonstrates the different features between the old rites of passage and what is being practiced today as formal institutionalized education (Hill, 2004).

Table 2.
Old rights versus modern practices

OLD RITES	MODERN PRACTICES
Have religious basis	Tend to be secular
The timing is in keeping with natural, seasonal timing, sun, moon, rain, stars	By the clock and calendar
Centred on concrete experiences	Abstract, word-based, numerical
Dramatic, intense, forceful, fast	Slow, extended, vague as to ultimate destination
Engendered awe	Produce detachment, boredom
Inspired continuous participation in cultural history	Youth isolated from larger cultural realities
Resulted in immediate, unmistakable status change	Provides no direct deliverance in to adult roles and status
Occurrences are at a determined time and place with the community as witness	Proceeds indefinitely not usually resulting in general community recognition
Adults manage the process	Process managed by detached employees

Hill (n.d.), similar to Hunn (2004), offered an Africa life paradigm which embodied the principles of Nguzo Nane and Nguzo Saba. These included: nature and humanity are one; human and nature experience cyclical, periodic, inevitable change; and in nature, these changes are celestial and life affirming. Elements categorizing the variety of Africentric rites and rituals feature the following (Hill); separation of child from community, observations of nature, purification rituals, character tests, collective efforts based on age, rejection of childhood, listening to elders, special language, and special names.

The process of engaging the young male in Africentric ritual is the step forward to providing meaningful foundations for him to build unmistakable identity, which is self-directed and not others-directed. Thus, within the community he would see himself with particular attributes, qualities, and responsibilities as an integral part of the whole. Therefore, if accessing a higher level of education would determine his success for himself, family, and community, then no doubt that would be the logical choice. The thought of a whole community of inner-city men advancing academically is mind-blowing. In such a case, the immediate repercussions of an enlightened community and nation would be most imminent and visible. Fascinating to note is that this brand of spiritualism today is referred to as new age and is as feared by fundamentalists as being modern day witchcraft and blasphemous.

The inherited Christian church, it is observed, employed specific rituals and rites, but, sadly, it was

based on the Eurocentric tenets of religious beliefs and marginal to the world in which the male lived. The Afri-Jamaican (Jamaicans descended majorly from Africans) community, as a whole, has no homogenous Africentric ritual that marks passages for young boys and men. It does not exist in its most pure and positive societal form. This is most troubling as it is expected that elders and adults would teach the young, however, the elders themselves seem to be in need of ritual and guidance themselves (Hill, n.d.).

Pre-Emancipation Education of Males in Jamaica

As Miller (2007) declared in a discussion on the development of higher education, the history of how education develops is critical to discovering the future of the society's management of the system. It is a well-known historical fact that the education of African slaves, from which the Jamaican male descends, was never a priority, nor much less, a consideration on the part of dominant-ruling, minority-enslaving class of absentee planters for over 400 years. One could only imagine that the cause for the education of the male slave, in the plantation environment, could only be the responsibility of the slave himself. Education would no doubt have taken the form of situated learning within the "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) one was born or sold into, within the slavery system. The minimum basic, but vital, skills were required, with literacy and numeracy not being a part of the curriculum. At this stage, the beginning of the system of *plan-*

tocracy and the importation of human cargo for slaves, vague African retentions would have to suffice for the survival of peoples of various tribal affiliations. Laws would have been passed that severely opposed the desire and act of slaves learning to read and write. A conclusion to be drawn from this situation is that for the better part of 400 years the Afri-Jamaican male was prohibited and extremely discouraged from pursuing any form of academic acquisition.

The slave trade was a matter of economy (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998), very unlike the economy as proposed by Nguzo Nane, *ujama*; the activity of slavery imposed a direct separation between the branches, the African male, and the roots, the African tribe, rituals, rites, community, culture, norms and mores. Friere (1978, p. 141) spoke to what must have obtained with the travesty of slavery; the character of the divide and rule fundamental, which would have operated against the model of African unity proposed by Africentrism. He wrote, "Concepts such as unity, organization and struggle are immediately labeled as dangerous" (p. 141).

History witnesses the formal education of the plantation slaves being undertaken by missionaries whose primary objective was to Christianize slaves; delivering their barbaric souls from sin (Turner, 1998; Moreau, 1987). This activity further sought to wrench the heart, souls, and minds of the newly enslaved Africans form their experiences of rites and rituals of their ancestry. The missionary education was dependent once more on the social mores, experiences, and beliefs of Eurocentric peoples. Noteworthy is the use of specific scriptural passages which inculcated in the minds of slaves that their lot in life is to be obedient, submissive, and subservient to their masters (Turner, 1998; Moreau, 1987).

Ex-slaves, Lisle and Baker, have been credited in the Jamaican history of religious education towards slaves as incorporating Africentric traditions of worship alongside the Christianity they preached (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). They seemed to have encouraged early literacy through the use of the Bible and hymnals along with the strategy of appointing members of the enslaved to ranks of deacon and pastor.

West Indian history books have recorded that one of the male slaves' primary functions was their reproductive prowess to increase the slave owner's holdings of slave workforce on the estates (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). This pre-emancipation male state of being seemed to be related to the results of modern discussions on men being at risk; hence, the alienation seeds were deeply planted where men felt powerless, alienated, disrespected, and inadequate (Ellis, 2003). Even though by the early 1800's the memory of Africa was faded in the minds of the slave, Jamaican culture and attitudes were being formed out of the ancestral spirit, as exemplified in religion, song and dance (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998).

By 1815 slave rebellions would pepper the lives of all inhabitants of Jamaica through to 1865-easily a 50-year period of struggle and resistance; no doubt the warrior nature of the male slave would rise to the fore with the presence of the Maroons and their warfare tactics. Moreau (1987) noted that when the British banished Maroons from Jamaica, they migrated to Nova Scotia where they were trained and employed in the building industry. The historical evidence suggested that the West Indian slave system was based on a human capitalist theory (Baptiste, 2001) which viewed the enslaved as factors of production, thus higher education, much less basic education, was not important to the ruling class of the day. The closest thing to ritual, pomp and ceremony the slave experienced would occur when he was admitted to church membership (Turner, 1998). This form of ritual would be deemed far more acceptable and worthy than the forms practiced as part of the slaves heritage.

Post-Emancipation Education of Males in Jamaica

The period following the abolition of the slave trade and, subsequently, the abolition of slavery in the middle of the 19th Century did little to improve the education status of the newly un-slaved. Formal education was not necessary for the black man to survive post-emancipation as their occupations remained relatively the same as under slavery; mainly as agriculturists and artisans. It was the black males' resilience and innate survival strategies that allowed for the survival of their families and communities (free villages) at that time in history. Apprenticeship was perceived as a new name for an old condition and leading into the 20th Century; education for these Jamaican ancestors did not provide much in the way of educational hope. What was witnessed, however, was the development of religions and rituals, which partly reflected African centeredness in forms of how elders were revered in their communities and how young stewards took telling from the adults in the community.

Moreau (1987) noted that during the course of history Blacks were not allowed to aspire to educational heights as their White counterparts. Research would indeed show the minimal attention dealt to the upgrade of education for Blacks in the early post-emancipation years.

The five-year Negro Education Grant of £30,000 per annum was decreased to its end in 1845, while debate ensued as to whether the education of blacks should remain under the auspices of the religious bodies or if it should be transferred to the local legislature (Gordon, 1963). In 1835, the final award was given to the religious bodies. The Mico Charity is credited with being the only body supplying more funds than expected for the funding of schools for Blacks in the post-emancipation early period. Despite these awards, Latrobe observed, in his 1838 report to the British Government, that "no system combining practical lessons of industry with the culture of the mind has been discovered, or tried up to the present moment, by any party"

(Gordon, 1963, p. 30). This observation clearly stated that the thought of even applying Africentric principles in the delivery of education never occurred to facilitate a smoothness of receiving learning and education. The attempt by the Mico Charity and Foundation to facilitate training of native teachers might be the heralding of some attempt to apply principles, which spoke to the need for learners to be instructed and taught by their own.

In 1843, the Calabar College, under the Baptist mission, was established for older men who were illiterate but dedicated to the path of study, the ten men, eventually graduated as ministers and teachers. The content of study under a minister's tutelage included Hebrew, Greek, reading, composition, and the gospel. The instruction delivered must have been at once from the European perspective, as the reverend instructor must have been schooled under a British Baptist mission, precluding any instruction in any element of African origin.

The major concentrated effort of applying Africentric ideas to male adult education occurred in the system offered by Garvey in the post-emancipation to the pre-independence period. Sherlock and Bennett (1998) quoted Garvey on racial consciousness:

> The West Indians generally, have developed more of the white psychology than of black outlook; but gradually in some of the islands, the consciousness of race is dawning upon the people which may develop, to place competent Negroes there in the right frame of mind to be of service when needed. There is much hope for the West Indies as for anywhere else in the outlook of the Negro toward nationalization and independence. (p. 294)

They asserted that he understood the marginalization of the inner African within the Jamaican male as a result of alienation experienced (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). Garvey sought to renew and improve the consciousness of Afri-Jamaicans through his establishment of the honor systems within the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), through pomp, pageantry, and ceremony, which are a cultural essential for peoples of any race. These honors were obviously Africentric; Earl of the Congo, Viscount of the Niger, Knight of the Nile, and Baron Zambezi (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998).

Garvey definitely understood the value and the need for Africa-centered rituals in social and educational contexts, without the need to directly adopt exactly what was done in Africa. The UNIA, established in 1914 on the Emancipation Day anniversary, could easily be seen as the first Black Man university (even though it admitted women) of higher education. Its objectives included the encouragement of educational attainment, race consciousness and racial pride. While Garvey sought to establish, in Jamaica, the equivalent of the Tuskegee Institute, the UNIA was the vehicle through which he made the most progress in keeping Africa on the agenda; battling Eurocentric negative ideas of the African history (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). The basic tenets of the UNIA seemed to be strongly aligned with the principles of Nguzo Saba and Nguzo Nane with militant emphasis on discipline, self-education, and Black racial identity.

In 1936, Garvey decided to open a school of African philosophy in Toronto, Canada, the main objective being that of training Blacks for world leadership in the UNIA (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). This offered a clear choice for the Black male if he should definitely consider higher education. This Garvey institution is recorded as the most definitive institution, which sought to incorporate African awareness amongst the enrolled adults of the era. No doubt with increased awareness of African life, the adults in the Diaspora could make a connection between their place in history, their identity, and their present day norms and values. It is recorded that this schooling had a profound impact on the men who enrolled as they became leaders in their own right. This exposure and no doubt ritual contributed to their single-eye focus on becoming more than what history had promised.

Current Educational System for Male Nationals: Identity and Culture - the Implications for Applying Africentrism to Theories and Practice of Education for Male Students

Identity affects learning as it provides motivation towards learning, goals and aspirations (Bracher, 2006). In testing the question of lack of Africentric rituals contributing to males' lack of motivation towards higher education, we can surmise that if the young Jamaican male cannot identify himself with that which is greater than himself, and that which clearly supports seeking an Anglophone/Eurocentric form of higher education, then this would not be an automatic goal for him.

In a role-play, in a customer service training I facilitated in 2008, it was most startling that one adult male participant played the character of a young man trying to get the attention of two young ladies in the community on their way to evening classes. When he was asked what his future plans were he replied' "Mi waan be a baby faadah!" As the facilitator, I nearly died of shock, because it registered strongly with me, that these adults were role-playing a real-life scenario, the mental context of this male figure and how he identified himself. The aspiration assigned to his male ancestors was very much alive; to sire offspring with his female slave counterparts for the backra massa; the parallel was too much to bear.

Bracher (2006), in his in depth discussion of the nature of identity, stated:

> To enhance learning and reduce our most serious problems, it is thus crucial that educators, policy makers and the general public come to understand more fully the nature of identity and its needs and the failure to learn and also contribute to our social problems….the need to have one's being appreciated and validated" (pp. 6-7).

Africentric rituals are meant to positively provide for these identity needs of young Black males in the Jamaican context. These identity needs existed and were being attended to by the anti-social rituals, as seen

developed by young males in gangs and other deviant-behaving groups. Despite the provisions of various communities, and social and politically-initiated programs to enhance youth development through sports, arts, and culture, there is a gross neglect of the basic identity context. This was mentioned earlier in Hill's (n.d.) comparison of the old rites and modern systems of validation.

Bracher (2006) recommended that in addressing the social ills created by identity issues, the learners should be provided with opportunities to engage in self-description and expressions of attitudes as part of the learning process. Sports training, for instance, did not necessarily provide such opportunity for males, neither was it the first choice for most young males to opt to become a part of a church community which offered life-affirming rituals.

Sotiri (2008), in analyzing service provisions for marginalized young men in Sydney, Australia, documented that the young men feel that the services were not meeting their needs. Additionally, he noted that the males' own belief and culture issues prohibited them from accessing the health and welfare systems implemented (not designed) to cater to them. Moreover, in the midst of recommendations emanating from the research report, a noted suggestion was an *alternative education* to be set up to accommodate males when they had failed or had been failed by the mainstream school system. Sotiri also mentioned that the services developed to serve them were more focused on their existence rather than on the actual needs of the young men.

The issue of family relationships and fathering were also cited in Sotiri's recommendations, in addressing and meeting the needs of young men. Hill (n.d.), in his paper, referred directly to the issue of the adult male figure contributing to the identity development of the young black male. He presented the term *cultural socialization* as a development strategy for African-American youth, ergo, Jamaican Black youth. This is in tandem with the earlier mention of rites of passage tenets which, he believed, sought to instill ethnic pride, self worth, focus of control, and mastery in youth, as well as, to protect them from societal assaults to their self-esteem and cultural identity. Hill further noted that adults, particularly males who had functioned as teachers, mentors, and youth service providers, had generally experienced difficulties in nurturing and engaging in generative behavior. He believed that they themselves were makeshift adults who had never been initiated by a community of adults into adulthood.

Rice and Steckley (1997), in describing key elements in the traditional Canadian native peoples' culture in relation to lifelong learning, declared that in removing native children to school them in residences ran by various Christian churches severed a primary cultural umbilical cord that inhibited lifelong learning successes of native children. The Vision Quest ritual is a rite of passage for young native males which help in creating "a strong sense of purpose and identity" for a young man approaching manhood (Rice & Steckley, 1997, p. 220). This is one such cultural rite that was absent from the fundamental learning stages of the native youth, which contributed to obstacles in a successfully assimilating into a Eurocentric model of learning. The Vision Quest, as they argued, was a successful cultural learning tool which could easily be adapted to the lifelong learning framework for native Canadians.

The factors of identity, culture and rites of passage being discussed in this paper gave rise to the need for the examination of the state of higher education in relation to adult males today. Chevannes (2005) outlined the historical context of the male/female educational dynamic by pointing out that *patriarchy* in the Caribbean had never been so strong; hence, girls were automatically expected to exceed and were never discriminated against. Some feminists would argue this point strongly. Nevertheless, Chevannes (2005) used the history to suggest that boys were predisposed to dropping out of the educational system because it was not weighted in their favor. On the matter of the school system alienating boys, he opined that such a factor may in fact contribute to the crime and violence witnessed in the Jamaican society.

In leaning toward the development of the human being, Chevannes (2005) noted that social culture made a man into a human being. However, this author was in disagreement with such a statement, as a human being always becomes who he/she is by virtue of living in whatever environment he/she finds himself/herself. Nonetheless, this author do agree with Chevannes statement when he stated that quality education was the nurturing of human potential, even through to the tertiary level. The question was even raised as to how to inculcate within the young male who carried a gun, with the values which allowed them to select alternative roles that were not anti-social.

The answer lies in the application of Africentric/Afri-Jamaican rituals from an early age. Chevannes (2005) mentioned a number of groups attempting to address this problem. Nevertheless, investigations would reveal that Africentric values were not used as the hallmark of the design and structure of these outreach programs. In looking at the government's attempts for males to be as aggressive toward education as females, it was noted that the GSAT examinations had a lower pass mark for boys than for girls. Miller (n.d) revealed that the Jamaican government took steps to have teachers upgraded to the tertiary level. As previously mentioned, if the majority of teachers are females then it is logical to conclude that the majority of teachers accessing higher levels of education are going to be female. Chevannes noted that boys were more likely to drop out or under perform as the learning system of doing was not infused into the curriculum for boys. Consequently, there is the males' lack of interest and subsequent fall out of the system.

In discussing cultural relevancy in the adult learning process, Isaac and Rowland (2002) declared that

including real life experiences reflective of the learner's culture may assist in the learner "taking control of their lives and improve their social conditions" (p. 2). Furthermore, in researching the African American sermon in the Black church, they found that the quality and feature of the sermon drew on the oral tradition and literature of the African culture. Isaac and Rowland identified the themes as self-ethnic personalities/experience, self-ethnic social experience, self-ethnic psycho-culture, Africentric affirmations, and self-ethnic metaphors. Each theme related to various perspectives and realities for the African American. Thus, if a study was to be conducted on our Black churches, in certain communities in Jamaica, then similar parallels would likely be drawn. Moreover, if the methods used by the Black preacher could be incorporated in the school system, then the results could be a resounding success with a greater number of males being prepared to access higher education.

Miller (2007) declared that over the last 150 years the economy in the *Anglo-phone* Caribbean has been unable to absorb the abundant talent derived from higher education. Additionally he stated "no single country can by itself develop and sustain the critical mass of human and financial resources needed to offer high quality higher-degree programs..." (pp. 71-72). What does this mean for the male desiring to seek higher education?

Over the last 150 years the world really has not demanded of the Black Jamaican male to pursue higher education; it was not part of the vision in the past. In future, however, as Jamaica sets before it a 2030 vision of attaining a first world status, the issue of higher education for males becomes a dire factor. World research will declare that the more educated a nation, the more competitive it becomes and the more financially secure and advanced. The phenomenon of males' low enrolment at higher levels of education is sure to change if Africentric theories, values and rituals, suggested herein, are fully explored and incorporated in the learning systems for boys and eventually for girls. The learning system is not broken for the girls but it is broken for the boys.

The question could arise; who said higher education is a path of success for Jamaican males? First, it would have to be determined exactly what is meant by the word *success*. As Miller (2007) emphasized, literacy tended to be a major problem for males (possibly a result of the school learning system); hence, being dropouts, they had to negotiate life with the *street smarts* they had cultivated. In addition, he revealed that males were more likely to be employed than females. Another paradox was that although more females dominated among postgraduates at University of the West Indies (UWI), at the Masters' level of study, there were fewer than 20 women at the professorial level when compared to the 150 men in that category (Hamilton, 2001). In 1998-1999, UWI, Mona campus, recorded male enrolment at 29% with female enrolment at 71% in the

undergraduate programs; male enrolment was higher in the science, technology, and agriculture faculties which registered 47% compared to female 53%, hence males were not dominating the figures in enrolment (Bailey, 2003).

Chevannes (2005) opined that once boys were in school and motivated they would perform, as well as, their female counterparts; therefore, it was the under participation of the males and not under achievement that should be the main focus. Africentric rituals could help to provide the focus and motivation for the boys. Chevannes' opinion was supported by the 1999 data derived from the Caribbean examinations Council where more males (5,304) entered to sit the examination in the technical subjects than females (4,406) and the passes were almost, but not quite, equal (males 50.2%; females 49.8%) (Bailey, 2003). Bailey also mirrored Chevannes' thoughts in determining that the concerns of male performance at higher levels of Caribbean education was more about under participation than under achievement. This argument deserved repetition.

Under participation loudly signaled the lack of motivation to be addressed by identifying systems, which aligned with the male's interests, identity, and sense of being. These systems could not be abstract, vague, and lacking in concrete achievements, they had to be current, relevant, tactile, and applicable. Conclusively, an Africentric framework could provide these elements and more.

Implications for the Management of Africentric Paradigms in Male Education

Therefore, who should take up the responsibility of creating, managing and implementing the Africentric paradigms to treat young male under participation in education? This is a most troubling and disconcerting question, as existing social organizations are most likely founded on basic Eurocentric and North American culture and psychology. A similar question was asked in the aftermath of emancipation at the issue of the Negro Education Grant. Could the Church be relied upon? Could the schools be relied upon? What of the families and the communities?

One group formed out of the discussions on issues affecting men and, in particular fathers, Fathers Incorporated (Ellis, 2003), could be a testing ground for the incorporation of Africentric rites and rituals in a program developed for young males. The stated objective of Fathers Incorporated was to help men become better fathers and, as previously mentioned, the fathering of our Jamaican males was crucial to male identity and motivation. If more than discussions or workshops on Africentric rituals and rites of passages were established and practiced, then our young black males would have an option and access to experience a social, spiritual, and psychological revolution. Statistics would reflect a

higher participation of men in higher education, homes, communities, leadership, and national life.

The Extra Mural Department, established in the mid 1940's to engage the Caribbean character at UWI, under the early leadership of Sir Phillip Sherlock, (Hopeton, 1985) provided a structural framework and model to explore and house a possible Africentric paradigm. Within this structure ritual and rites could be created and instituted in a bid toward nation building and redirection of both young and old men at risk in our Jamaican society.

Training of process managers would have to take place to ensure that the rituals and rites of passages were correctly and authentically followed. The objectives of the program must be presented and may be done on a family and community basis rather than as a disconnected organization. The exposure to European and North American customs may prejudice one's mind against something so new and different, causing resistance to the creation of the process. On the family basis, the family leader (male or female) may undertake to include Africentric/Afrocentric rituals like Kwanza at Christmas time or coming of age rituals, instead of the usual parties that have little cultural meaning to individual and other participants. The program would include African history, geography, anthropology, science, art, religion, rituals, agriculture, fishing, hunting, shooting (spears/catapults/swords), oratory, craft, music, capoeria (martial arts dance), and more. These activities are no different from the archery, fencing, sword-fighting, polo playing, classical music, and chess, which are so elitist in the Eurocentric world.

Discussion

You can be educated in soul, vision and feeling as well as in mind (Garvey, 1967). To see your enemy and know him is a part of the complete education of man; to spiritually regulate one's self is another form of higher education that fits a man for a nobler place in life, and still to approach your brother by the feeling of your own humanity, is an education that softens the ills of the world and makes us kind indeed (Garvey, 1967).

No mainstream education system has ever been designed with minorities, in particular Black youth, in mind up until recently. The *developed world* is just beginning to be involved in the process of exploring cultural learning affecting peoples who are not of the *majority* group of peoples seeking to access higher education in the Eurocentric, Anglo-Saxon world. As Friere (1978) suggested, the system of education had been totally one of the pedagogy of the oppressed where *banking education* was the order of the day. The system was designed specifically to support the means of production where workers only needed the minimal amount of education in order to carry out monotonous rote production; the feeding of sugarcane into the mill, the chopping of ripe sugarcane for harvest, the job of making

horse shoes by the apprentice blacksmith. Education of non-Eurocentric peoples was steeped in experiential and situated learning, much like what was being practiced by the many and varied continental African communities. This type of learning was not the learning which was the hallmark of Eurocentric education, which placed specific focus on intellectual pursuits and arguments. This was exemplified in the American film *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard & Grazer, 2001), where the true story unraveled at the prestigious Princeton University.

Furthermore, it is clear that mainstream education was never designed for the descendants of African slaves who would be present in the Western world Diaspora in the 21st Century. The only way for a man of African descent to *beat* the system of Eurocentric education was that he had to become very good at it; above and beyond expectation as has had been immediately exemplified by the current President of the United States, Barack Obama, or his predecessors Thurgood Marshall. Similar expectations have been achievements by our plethora of Jamaican scholars who have won prestigious international scholarships; for example, the celebrated National Hero (Jamaica) Marcus Garvey, at the risk of being labeled criminally insane amongst other things. Many African male descendants cannot identify with this *only way* of *beating the education system*; it does not seem to exist in their DNA. This is not to say that they are physiologically incapable of doing so, as was opined by Hitler at the 1936 Olympics with the Jesse Owens gold medal wins, but rather that their own Africentric socialization is so absent, lost, and invisible that the pursuit of something alien to them is certainly not on their agendas.

The education system in Jamaica is decidedly lacking in Africentric practices. While a few attempts have been made to inculcate within the young, through the education ministry's curriculum, the elements of our national culture, through stories, cultural days and events, it is still alien to the child growing up; as it is seen alien to the child's real life. Thus, these images and examples of our heritage shown on a cultural day are not habitually a part of the practices of the child's family life. The activities only contribute to the *knowledge* of our past, but have no dedicated hold in the present or the future.

The male in today's society, despite the valiant efforts made by educators and various ministries of education throughout the years, has not been equipped to think about or plan for the pursuit of higher education. At a preparatory stage for college education, if the dropout rate usually occurs within the first three years of the secondary education process, then intervention must take place most radically before the child leaves the primary education system. This intervention cannot begin and end with the child (male/female); it must include family and community. As the August celebrations surrounding Independence remembrances are planned and staged annually, it seems that the *Africentric Jamaican*

culture is reduced to mere entertainment and competition. All students, except those pursuing undergraduate and post graduate degrees at Jamaican universities, must succeed in examinations which are external to the Jamaican cultural systems.

The case for the education system to radically adopt all relevant facets of Africentrism is supported by the tenets of Africentrism, which place wholesale value on community education, as opposed to just sports reformation as is the case for education of unattached male youth. The education of males for the level of higher education has to be at the forefront of the national agenda. It cannot be a token act to be treated with cursory glances, functions, and seminars. It must be a concerted legal effort to ensure colleges of study for men, developed with the focus of ensuring that males desired to pursue higher degrees in the sciences, humanities and education, sports, engineering, or any other suitable field of endeavor. This also meant that financial provisions must be made by the state to ensure that economics was not a major deterring factor to access higher education. If the males themselves were employed in very good paying positions then, like a mortgage, they must be made to repay the government for the education provided for them.

At this time in the 21st Century, there is a fear of what Africa means, as worldwide media seemed to be obsessed with always showing the diseased and dispossessed of the continent. Often we forget that Africa is indeed an entire continent and the truth of what Africa is today has never been portrayed as a wholesome place to aspire. Not for a moment, am I advocating that there should be a rebirth of the *back-to-Africa* movement of the 60s and 70s, popular in the Americas and the West Indies at the time. However, surely a wide understanding of the riches and history of the relevant parts of the continent should be brought to bear on a child's learning. Many practices which are done by rote in some Jamaican households, the beliefs and superstitions, have a direct linkage to practices carried over from the West African regions of the continent by our fore-parents. The problem is that no one is telling the reasons or explaining how the practices occur and why they do occur. The oral tradition no longer serves to teach wisdom and create longevity of a tribe, community or peoples; hence, our youngsters and in particular young men have very little to which to look forward.

In the period 1993-1998, the Ministry of Education created the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) project which sought to change curriculum in the secondary level of education, in which it was recommended that a study of Marcus Garvey and his works were to be done at a certain grade level. This recommendation was not necessarily taken into consideration in all schools and the students missed out on a vital part of our history and identity; because the students were not exposed to radical ideas concerning race and moving ahead successfully. Many young men did not have a vision, much less a clear vision for themselves or their lives and could not find anything of substance on which to hold. In this regard, the many strains of Rastafarianism with its culture of wearing locked hair and smoking the illegal substance of ganja (marijuana) held a strong appeal for many youths. Unfortunately, this route, with its roots in a form of Africa-centeredness and Marcus Garvey as one of its icons, did not lead to any measurable success for those who assimilated themselves into this type of culture/religion.

Rastafarianism was not a welcomed religion or culture in mainstream society. Nonetheless, in recent times, the crowning of a Rastafarian Miss Jamaica Universe in 2007 may signal that attitudes were changing with this image of blackness or African-centeredness. The popularity of reggae icon Bob Marley added to the allure of the search of black-themed success and identity balance for the young male, who quickly identified with the image as some kind of foundation for his life. This allure signified a hunger and deep-seated need for knowledge of one's past, roots, and history, which had been obscured by time, place, and modern demands of daily life.

If we are to refer to the comparisons in Table 2, we would see that in the customs of the old rites of passage, a program of care, nurturing, guidance, and direction was provided for a young man growing into adulthood. This program of development would be sure to alleviate future problems in the education and the mental health systems, as the process would give the individual, a sense of place and grounding as he forges ahead in life. The reasons for pursuing certain paths are clear and definitive, so that when he arrives at the checkpoint and milestone to move into the relevant areas of study there would be no hesitation as to what to do next. When a young man meets up on difficulties in negotiating the various stages of life he will not be daunted or deterred, so his focus remains firm so that he is motivated to pursue what he sets out to pursue. In doing so, he would recognize that his success was most significant not only for himself, but for his family, community, nation and the world.

The Africentric paradigm of ritual and rites would not only work for males, but for females, as well. The program, however, would have to be completely different from that prepared for the male; the education system so far is genderless. The curriculum is not altered depending on the gender of the student, but the results thereafter are compared on a gender basis. Introducing Africentric rituals of study, experience, tasks practice, stages of development, and appropriate rewards of change of status and recognition could only augur well for the young man (or woman) growing into adulthood, in a rapidly changing global residential place.

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Appendix A

RITES OF PASSAGES IN JAMAICA

Rites of passages in Jamaica vary from religion to religion, community to community, era to era and there exists no one identifiable ceremony that holds true for every single Jamaican individual.

A discussion on the rites of passage will have to be inclusive of issues of race, class, creed, locale and heritage, just to name a few of the indicators which would determine certain ceremonies which are a part of one's developmental stages in life. Such a discussion would merit an entire research to explore the varying rites observed in local Jamaica.

The generic ceremonies of having birthday celebrations, wakes, funerals, weddings and graduation are just that - generic and only distinguished by individual choice and freedoms. These tend to be activities which are external, action-oriented, social event-focused rather than internal spirit-focused activities.

Where activities mark transitions from one stage of life to another, they are not formally accepted widespread engagements with the sanction of an entire community. Each community writes their own rules which change according to popular culture each day.

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2010

The View Behind Rubber Bars: An Analysis and Examination of Faith and Non-Faith Jail Reentry Programs in Central Florida

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Abstract

This paper examined the usefulness of jail reentry programs as an alternative towards increased jail and prison costs. Policy issues for returning inmates could and often did include future employment prospects, housing and public safety. Prisoner reentry programs generally fell into two broad categories; faith and non-faith based. Generally, non-faith programs were conducted in jail or prison while the individual was incarcerated for an extended period of time. Non-faith type programs involved classes on anger management, G.E.D. attainment, college credits, or alcohol or drug abuse therapy. Faith based programs were generally Christian based, although they usually did not discriminate against other individuals of different religions joining their program. Faith based programs were usually conducted outside of the jail/prison environment. However, a few jails and prisons did keep Bible or religious wings.

Reentry programs are often managed from the client-oriented side of public and non-profit administration. However, the majority of charities would not describe the individuals in their program as clients. Rather, in faith based programs there is a tendency for the administration to identify the individual as part of a larger family-based treatment program, not as a client-oriented service provider.

It is worth mentioning that most faith-based programs are comprised only of men. The men in faith based programs live, work and sleep under the same roof and spend entire months cut off and isolated from modern-day distractions. These difficult processes allow the men to adjust and refocus their lives in an attempt to create a lasting change in their lifestyle, and possibly prevent them from recidivating.

Prisoner reentry programs received a boost in political support in April of 2008 when President Bush signed the *Second Chance Act* allocating $200 million for municipalities and cities to use in order to create, manage and expand upon existing prisoner reentry programs. Between 1999 and 2006, the population of people incarcerated in prison substantially increased from 1.1 million to almost 1.5 million (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). During this time period, additional research was compiled examining the impact of parole and other work-release programs in order to gauge whether the idea of prisoner re-entry programs had any merit. In 2008, the Pew Center on the States, released a report that found 2,319,258 adults were held in American prisons or jails, or one in every 99.1 men and women. A total of $49 billion was spent on corrections by states in 2007 (Pew Center on the States).

Almost 650,000 inmates are released each year and most have no supervision at all (Travis, Solomon, & Wahl, 2001). The majority of returning inmates travel back to their former neighborhoods vastly unprepared to start a new and different lifestyle for themselves. Reentry programs are a tenuous, yet, brawny thread, which could potentially change the cycle of re-arrest and re-incarceration for returning inmates.

Definition of Prisoner/Jail Reentry

Prisoner and jail reentry programs were previously known as prisoner rehabilitation programs. They were set up as classes or programs so that prisoners, who had been removed from society, could adapt easily when released. Prisoner/jail reentry is defined as "…the process of leaving the adult state prison system and returning to society" (La Vigne, Mamalian, Travis, & Visher, 2003, p.1).

Policy Challenges among Returning Inmates

Policy issue no. 1: Prisoner reentry and public safety. The government's obligation to protect its citizens from actions committed by criminals should not vanish once these former criminals had served their time and were released from prison. Almost 100,000 prisoners each year were simply released and left without any assistance, guidance, or supervision (Travis, 2005).

During the course of reentry programs, prisoners were allowed to attend school, start working, and connect with their families during the day. At night, the prisoners were returned to the prison, but were granted restricted privileges to spend time in society. These types of programs encompassed halfway houses, work release facilities, furloughs, and education release programs. The idea was to not only allow the inmates to

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connect with the community, but to also lower the probability of crime once they were released back into society (Travis & Visher, 2003). Research has also shown that prisoners who were regularly supervised prior to and upon their release from prison, were statistically less likely to engage in crime, and had a lower recidivism rate following their release (Seiter & Kadela, 2003; Travis, 2005).

Policy issue no. 2: Families and children. In 2002, one in 45 children had a parent in prison (Mumola, 2004). While incarcerated, parents may not be able to see their children for a long time, and if they were single parents, their child may have to be placed in foster care or with relatives. This served to cause a great deal of anxiety and stress for the parents and could impact the child's future development and adjustment to society (Hairston & Rollin, 2003; Maluccio & Ainsworth, 2003).

Similarly, parents trying to reconcile with their spouses may also experience difficulty and trauma (Braman, 2002). Spouses may be estranged from each other while in prison and prisoners may be transported to a far away location making it difficult for visitation. There may be issues of infidelity or divorce while in prison, further complicating matters between spouses. Both spouses lose the mutual trust that comes from being in a relationship with the loss of normal emotional and physical contact prior to imprisonment (Hairston & Rollin, 2003).

In other words, the longer the prison stay, the less the contact. Therefore, the less the contact, the weaker the social and familial bonds inmates developed with their families and friends. Consequently, research proved that ex-offenders were unlikely to successfully reintegrate once they returned to society (Hairston, 1998). Additionally, with the passage of stricter sentencing laws, inmates now have fewer opportunities to stay in contact with their children and family; thus, making reintegration possibly even more difficult.

Faith-based programs could be more successful than non-faith programs for men who have children, because of the emphasis on religion and morality, especially related to family issues. Non-faith programs tended to be more reality-oriented with emphasis placed on everyday issues such as finding a job, going to Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) meetings and becoming a productive member of society (Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006).

Policy issue no. 3: Employment. Employment studies in economics have focused on the topic of job earnings as a deterrent for future criminal activity. Reentry programs are crucial at a time when young, impressionable men are in prison or jail surrounded by gangs and other criminals. Such associations could fuel and increase the likelihood that an individual would continue with criminal activity once they left jail or prison (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999).

Statistically, the longer a returning inmate remains unemployed, the higher the probability that an ex-offender would resort to crime (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). Additionally, as prison sentences have become longer, it increases the likelihood of a return to crime due to poor social skills, as well as, a robust drift towards crime because of the longer sentence (Lynch & Sabol, 2001).

Both faith and non-faith programs have job development opportunities such as culinary classes, lawn and gardening, and auto detailing services. Thus, it allowed for inmates to develop their job skills prior to returning to society.

Policy issue no. 4: Housing. Prisoners may face many challenges upon reentry but possibly the most immediate concern facing them upon returning to society is that of shelter (Lynch & Sabol, 2001; Petersilia, 2003). Usually, returning inmates are able to bunk or share rooms with friends, family members or other community members, who they know well enough to solicit such a request. In 1999, Nelson, Deess, and Allen conducted a study that followed 49 ex-prisoners released from New York state prisons. They found that 40 of the ex-prisoners were living with family, a spouse or a partner in the 30 days immediately following their release.

There are numerous barriers to gaining affordable housing that ex-offenders are subject to, beginning with the lack of monetary funds. Besides a lack of money for housing, the two most common barriers were those of community opposition and landlords' discrimination against housing the formerly incarcerated (Petersilia, 2003). The majority of inmates leave prison without enough money for a security deposit on an apartment. A small amount of money, known as gate money, was provided to inmates upon their departure from prison and ranged between $25 and $200 depending on the state. However, one-third of states did not provide any money at all upon the inmate's departure (Petersilia, 2003).

Florida's Prison System

The state of Florida. As the nation's fourth-largest prison system (after California, Texas, and the complete federal penitentiary system), the Florida Department of Corrections fulfills a major responsibility for public safety in Florida. Through a network of 59 major prisons, 76 work camps, and community-based facilities, the department manages incarceration and care for 93,000 inmates (Florida Department of Corrections [FLDOC], 2008). In fiscal year 2006-2007 the agency's annual operating budget was $2.2 billion (FLDOC).

Florida department of corrections: Prisoner facilities in Florida. The 135 prison facilities within the Florida Department of Corrections are divided into major institutions, annexes, work camps, work release centers, and road prisons throughout the state. The classification of inmates into these different facilities takes into account; the seriousness of their offenses, length of sentence, time remaining to serve, prior criminal record, escape history, prison adjustment, as well as, other factors. The most serious offenders with the longest sen-

tences and those least likely to adjust to institutional life were placed in more secure facilities (FLDOC, 2008).

Florida prisoner releases: Demographics. In June of 2006, 33,348 inmates were released that served an average of 85.5% of their sentences (FLDOC, 2008). Additionally, 64% (21,336) were released because their sentences expired, 14% (4,658) were released to some type of probation or community control, and 16% (5,326) were released to conditional release supervision (a type of supervision for more serious offenders). Furthermore, 89.4% (29,808) of offenders released in FY 2005-2006 were overwhelmingly male and over 40% (13,457) were between the ages of 35 and 49 (FLDOC, 2008).

Florida Faith-based Programs

Dunklin Memorial Camp, Okeechobee. Using the teachings of Christianity, the sole purpose of Dunklin is to assist drug and alcohol abusers with their addictions. The original idea was to create a tent ministry in Martin County, which eventually grew into a community and training center, successfully duplicated in other nations (Dunklin Memorial Camp, 2008). It is the Camp's belief that the Christian approach is the most effective method by which to eliminate an individual's destructive habits with alcohol or drugs.   Dunklin believes a spiritual, emotional and physical philosophy can successfully straighten an individual's determination to become a productive member of society.

Lamb of God, Okeechobee. Lamb of God is a faith-based program that is similar to the Dunklin Memorial Camp. However, the men at Lamb of God worked off campus, while both Faith Farm and Dunklin's men worked on their respective campuses for extended periods of time (Lamb of God, 2008). In the evening, the men returned to Lamb of God's campus and after supper held Bible classes, or attended AA or Narcotic Anonymous (NA) meetings. Some of the men also worked on their G.E.D. or took community college classes, nearby. Lamb of God allowed the men living on its campus a large degree of autonomy, freedom of movement, and self-discipline, which was rarely found among faith-based programs. Its Executive Director, Michael Lewandowski has been running the program since its establishment in 1990. The men lived at the Okeechobee campus for a period of 6 months, but they were free to leave at any point, unless they were under a court order to stay longer.

Faith Farm - Okeechobee and Boynton Beach. Faith Farm Ministries was created and founded in 1951 by Reverend Garland Eastham. In the beginning, the purpose of Faith Farm ministries was simply to offer shelter, comfort, food, and Biblical training to any homeless and destitute men who would desire them. However, in realizing that there was a critical need for an alcohol rehabilitation program in the community, Faith Farm initially created a three-day program to help men recover from alcohol abuse. In the years since

1951, this program has become a comprehensive eight-month program, serving men of the Christian faith.

The Love Center, Fort Pierce. The Love Center was created and founded in 1995 by Pastor Jerome Rhyant, who struggled with his own substance abuse problems prior to dedicating his life to assisting others with their difficulties. The Love Center also worked with the Sheriff's Department of Prisoner Re-Entry Programs to provide a halfway/transitional house for men who had recently left jail or prison and needed a place to stay temporarily. The Center is supported by donations, but men were also sponsored or paid for their own treatment out of pocket. While the Bible is used in classes, Pastor Rhyant credited self-responsibility as a viable method for men to reform their lives.

The Next Step Center, Stuart. The Center is a transitional housing and substance abuse center utilizing Christian based principles in order to alter lives. It was founded in 1996 and its Executive Director is Bob Wilson. On average about 20 men resided in one of the two buildings that the Center owned. Most of the men stayed between 4 to 7 months after re-entering society. Mr. Wilson worked actively with the Martin County Sheriff's Department to assist inmates to re-enter society successfully.

In combining a faith-based program with the Bible and Alcoholic/Narcotic Anonymous classes, men were allowed to stay for a minimum of 90 days. Certain types of criminals - such as sexual predators, domestic abuse offenders, and mental health disorder types - were not permitted to apply for admission at the Next Step Center.

Florida Non-faith based Programs

Freedom House, Port St. Lucie. Freedom House is a halfway house for men who had recently left jail. It was created and founded by anonymous donors and ran by Adam Hoff. Mr. Hoff is the Executive Director of the halfway house, which fitted seven men at any one time. Men, who had recently left jail, were allowed to reside at the house for a period of 6 months. They lived two to three a room and shared minor household expenses, although most supplies were donated. Most of the men had participated in some type of prisoner reentry program during their incarceration period. Freedom House was referred to men while in jail and allowed them to enter the halfway house after leaving jail. Mr. Hoff was also instrumental in the community; with maintaining ties with former Freedom House residents.

Saint Lucie County Sheriff's Offices of reentry programs and the Public Defender's Office of reentry programs, St. Lucie County, State of Florida. These two programs worked in conjunction with a number of agencies and departments, as well as, local non-profits and churches in order to create, assist and successfully integrate former offenders back into society. Since 2003, Major Patrick Tighe has been the Direc-

tor of the Prisoner Reentry Programs at the St. Lucie County Jail in Fort Pierce.

Also, since 2003, the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office has worked extensively to create and maintain prisoner re-entry programs at the St. Lucie County Jail. These programs were primarily operated as a joint operation with the St. Lucie Public Defender's Office. There were three chief programs, which have been operated both during and after the inmates were released from jail. These were the substance abuse program, the G.E.D. program, and the culinary program.

The substance abuse program was operated in cooperation with the Public Defender's Office in St. Lucie County. It was also operated as a therapeutic community and had its own wing in the St. Lucie Jail. In this manner, the inmates did not socialize or spoke to anyone else while in the program. This program was a 90 day program, upon which the inmate left jail with a certificate of completion.

The G.E.D. program was offered with the assistance of teachers from the Indian River State College (IRSC). They volunteered to assist inmates with graduating with their G.E.D. while in jail. Upon graduating from the program and once they have been released back into society, former offenders could apply for college classes at IRSC.

The Culinary program at the St. Lucie County Jail was offered primarily through the Aramark Corporation, which also cooked and handled all the meals at the jail. This program lasts about 6-8 weeks. On average, this program usually involved about 10 to 12 men for the duration of the program. Upon graduation and when the inmates have been released back into society, they are awarded a certificate of completion. However, Aramark did not offer assistance to the inmates when they left the program nor did the corporation allow the men to use their company as a reference. A number of these inmates looked for jobs in the St. Lucie County area and some lived in halfway houses, such as Freedom House, upon leaving jail.

During the course of this research, the central research question was, *what are the attitudes of the formerly incarcerated towards prisoner reentry programs*? This paper critiqued reentry programs and determined their viability for helping the formerly incarcerated reintegrate back into society. A corollary question was, what are the satisfaction levels among returning inmates when measured in these reentry programs? Also, which program appears to be more effective at assisting former inmates to reintegrate successfully back into society?

There are three hypotheses for this study. They are: 1) Faith based participants are more likely than non-faith participants to have heard about the reentry programs through a church or a Christian based organization; 2) Faith based participants would be more satisfied with the process of their program than non-faith based participants; and 3) Faith based participants are more likely to be satisfied with the overall content of their program than non-faith based participants.

Method

Sample

The faith and non-faith programs were geographically located in the state of Florida. Programs were evaluated in Florida in cities such as Stuart, Okeechobee, Fort Pierce, Boynton Beach and Port Saint Lucie. These cities are located in St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee and Palm Beach County.

Only men were the focus and subject of this research because men and especially African-American men are the single largest group of individuals leaving jail and prison today. The vast majority of prisoners returning to their communities were both male (91%) and single (83%) (Travis, Keegan, Cadora, Solomon, & Swartz, 2003).

Design and Procedure

This research examined both types of reentry programs; faith-based and non-faith based. Using data survey analysis, former prison and jail inmates' beliefs were evaluated concerning the programs they had recently participated. Analysis was conducted regarding the effectiveness in assisting them to reintegrate successfully back into society. The methodology consisted of quantitative questionnaires which provided in-depth perspectives on the value of client-oriented services in the reentry programs. Statistics package for the social sciences (SPSS) software was utilized for analyzing and discussing the findings of the quantitative methodology. SPSS software was also used to analyze the descriptive statistics, as well as, Chi-Square results from the data collected.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the data collected. There were more participants in the non-faith program (N = 112) than the faith program (N = 106).

Table 1.
Faith and Non-Faith Based Program Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample

	Faith (N = 106)	Non-Faith (N = 112)
Average Age	28	23.2
Married	13.2	24.1
Education - High School	67	52.3
Ethnic Background	73.6 (White)	82.1 (White)
Entered Program	34 (3-6 months)	33(3-6 months)
Heard of Program	58.5	48.2
Currently in probation	24	40
Currently on parole	2.9	4.2
Probation in past	75.5	74.8
Parole in past	1.9	0.0
Staying for entire treatment	75.0	56.4
Have children	48.1	53.2
Program improved relationship with children	90.0 (Yes)	88.0 (Yes)
Most common occupation prior to program	24.8 (Service)	19.8 (Service)
Length of time to gain employment after program	86 (1-3 mths)	84.3 (1-3 mths)
Program assists in gaining employment	69	72.6
Returning to prior profession	26.9	30.9
Starting new profession	28.8	27.3
Education assistance- G.E.D.	19.1	27.8
Education assistance- college credits	23.4	18.9
1st time in program	73.5	87.4
Participated more than once in program	26.5	12.6
If choice, wish to stay in program	84.6 (Yes)	64.8 (Yes)
Resource increase-more assistance with job hunting	29.3	25.0
Resource increase-more funding provided to administration	22.8	27.8
Resource increase-more assistance with housing	10.9	12.0
Decrease amount of time spent in program	24.6	14.6
Treated as clients during course of program	81.1	77.0
Satisfaction with Program Administrators' assistance	93.1	89.6
Satisfaction with Process of Program	91.1	92.4
Satisfaction with Content of Program	94.1	94.3

Chi-Square Analyses

Heard about the program. As indicated in Table 2, the majority of respondents (76.2%) found out about their program through either a prisoner/jail reentry program or through a friend/word of mouth. This was significant because it could be that the best method for *getting the word out* about a program's effectiveness was through word of mouth by jail or prison inmates. Consequently, the program's non-effectiveness or lack of success could also be discovered through word of mouth. Prisoners and inmates spoke among themselves quite frequently. Therefore, the best method by which prison officials could assure success in a program was by lis-

tening to these inmates' complaints or praises. A total of 218 men participated in answering this question.

How respondent heard about the program was significant for the type of program in which reentry clients participated (p.≤005). While there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis, it is hypothesized that more research in this area is needed to address the validity of the relationship.

Table 2.

Frequency distribution of respondents indicating how respondent heard about the program by type of program

	Faith		Non-Faith		Total	
Heard About Program	N	Valid %	N	Valid %	N	Valid %
Prisoner/jail reentry program	14	13.2	54	48.2	68	31.2
Through friend/word of mouth	62	58.5	36	32.1	98	45.0
Through church/Christian org	26	24.5	4	3.6	30	13.8
Through the internet	4	3.8	0	0.0	4	1.8
Other	0	0.0	18	16.1	18	8.3
Total	106	100	112	100.0	218	100.0

*p ≤.005

Respondent satisfaction with process of program. As indicated in the Table 3, the majority of respondents (57.2%) were extremely satisfied. In combining all three satisfaction categories (extremely satisfied, very satisfied, and satisfied), the total satisfaction percentage was 91.4%. This meant that the vast majority of respondents were overall satisfied with the program administrator's assistance with the treatment in their program. However, Chi-square analysis showed that there were no significant results for this category, possibly due to the small sample size. Thus, respondent satisfaction with process of the program was not significant for the type of program in which the reentry clients participated (p > .005).

Table 3.

Frequency distribution of respondents indicating respondent satisfaction with process of the program by type of program

	Faith		Non-Faith		Total	
Respondent Satisfaction	N	Valid %	N	Valid %	N	Valid %
Not at all satisfied	4	3.9	6	5.7	10	4.8
Somewhat satisfied	5	4.9	2	1.9	7	3.4
Satisfied	13	12.7	9	8.2	22	10.6
Very satisfied	19	18.6	31	29.2	50	24.0
Extremely satisfied	61	59.8	58	54.7	119	57.2
Total	102	100	106	100.0	208	100.0

*p >.005

Respondent satisfaction with content of the program. As indicated in Table 4, the majority of respondents (60%) were extremely satisfied with the program administrator's assistance. In combining all three satisfaction categories (extremely satisfied, very satisfied, and satisfied), the total satisfaction percentage was 94.3%. This meant that the vast majority of respondents were overall satisfied with the program administrator's assistance with the treatment in their program. However, Chi-square analysis showed that there were no significant results for this category, possibly due to the small sample size. A total of 210 men participated in answering this question. Therefore, respondent satisfaction with content of the program was not significant for the type of program that reentry clients participated in (p > .005). It is the researcher's suggestion that more research in this area is needed to address the validity of the relationship.

Table 4.

Frequency distribution of respondents indicating respondent satisfaction with content of the program by type of program

	Faith		Non-Faith		Total	
Respondent Satisfaction	N	Valid %	N	Valid %	N	Valid %
Not at all satisfied	2	1.9	5	4.7	7	3.3
Somewhat satisfied	4	3.9	1	0.9	5	2.4
Satisfied	11	10.7	12	11.2	23	11.0
Very satisfied	19	18.4	30	28.0	49	23.3
Extremely satisfied	67	65.0	59	55.1	126	60.0
Total	103	100	107	100.0	210	100.0

*p > .005

Discussion

Perhaps the most surprising finding that was discovered through this process was that there were no significant differences in men's attitudes towards their programs in either the faith or non-faith based programs. One of the hypotheses was that the faith based programs would have a higher satisfaction level than the non-faith programs. This was hypothesized because there was a perception that faith-based programs were stricter and more disciplined than non-faith programs, thereby increasing satisfaction levels.

In addition, the hypothesis that participants in the non-faith based programs would prefer to change to another program was shown to be incorrect. Chi-square analysis showed definitively that the former inmates when asked if they would prefer to be in another program definitely said they would prefer to stay in their program and not change programs.

While a majority of men chose family and housing as their two primary concerns upon their return to society. A number of men also wrote about the need to stay away from old neighborhoods and past friends who had tempted them and led them astray. In the non-profit programs, the men often spoke of starting a new life for themselves through Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Moreover, some of the men believed that an entire lifestyle change was warranted if they were ever to stop recycling through the criminal justice system. Research has confirmed this widely held opinion among the men interviewed; a complete lifestyle change was necessary for an ex-inmate in order to prevent re-incarceration (Taxman, Young, & Byrne, 2003).

While this research was conducted in a timely manner and various safeguards were utilized to protect individuals' privacy, as well as, complete the research in an ethical and honest manner, it would be unrealistic to suggest that this research could not have been done better. Additionally, the sample size could have been larger.

Other limitations included, but were not limited to, the quality and quantity of research questions.

Future Recommendations for Research

Although this study highlighted some major issues of prisoner reentry programs and allowed for a comprehensive evaluation from both a qualitative and quantitative point of view, there were several issues which future research should address and analyze. Reentry programs success often depends on how closely tied the individual is with the community and their family. Often the community and the family are uneasy with the recent return of a former inmate and may not welcome them back; thus, depriving the individual of invaluable linkages to assimilate faster. Research has shown that the attitude of returning inmate is greatly improved if they can even make one strong contact upon their return to society (Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006). Questions in the future, for a similar type of study, should ask questions as to how much community involvement the returning inmate would like and suggestions as to how to go about creating community involvement. A future research question, qualitatively asked, should try and ascertain what the returning inmate would like for his or her community to do constructively. This would allow the individual a greater feeling of reentry prior to returning to their former neighborhoods.

Community based activism is an important and germane part of the reentry process (Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006). Studies in Maryland, for instance, have focused on working with returning inmates by creating an exit orientation meeting once a month, in order to speak to the inmates prior to their leaving the program (Travis, 2005). These sessions inform the returning inmates on how to assimilate themselves better into society upon leaving prison. Inmates are taught how to renew their driver's license, and lists of shelters and food banks are provided. In addition, inmates are made wel-

come back to their neighborhoods through community members. Such committees should be established in communities across America because it allows for the jail or prison to take a wider role in reentering returning prisoners effectively.

Families and children of the returning inmates should be notified, whenever possible, that their family member is returning. Often when a prisoner is released, his or her family is not notified and is sometimes unable to even meet with the returning inmate in time to greet them. Prison officials should work with parole, probation, and other community members to create networks of partnerships to more easily assimilate the returning prisoners.

An inmate's network of support is crucial to their success in reentering society. Families, especially an inmate's children, are powerful magnets for preventing a former inmate from returning to a life of crime and a cycle of jail or prison (Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006). As public and political support grows for reentry programs, the odds increase in returning inmates' favor that reentry programs will become better at decreasing the recidivism rate. Community awareness of the number of returning inmates will increase if there is more of an effort coordinated through networks involving prison officials, parole, and probation officers and key community and neighborhood members.

In Saint Lucie County, there has been a concentrated effort by the Public Defender's Office, the Sheriff's Office and a loose coalition of homeless shelters, food banks, and community/non-profit leaders to aggressively assist and work with returning inmates. Ultimately, the community must become a more effective leader in preventing crime and reducing re-arrest rates; thus, lowering the recidivism rate for the formerly incarcerated. Future recommendations for research conducted in this field would be incomplete without hypothesizing that the family and children should be increasingly evaluated, as models for the prevention of recidivism among male individuals, as they are the weakest link in a complex chain of events.

In conclusion, as the title suggests, the bars on inmates cells may be rubbery allowing participation in reentry programs, but if programs are not examined and re-examined, the same bars could solidify, preventing inmates from a much needed second chance.

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