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A Case Study of Delinquency Reduction Programs at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg

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A CASE STUDY OF DELINQUENCY REDUCTION PROGRAMS AT

THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF HARRISBURG

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: A Case Study of Delinquency Reduction Programs at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg

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Using an in-depth case study, this dissertation qualitatively explored how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg focuses its organizational efforts to serve youth in the Harrisburg area to prevent delinquency. The research involved semi-structured interviews with eighteen staff members and former Club members to gauge their experiences in the Boys and Girls Club programs. Studying the activities, methods, and inner workings of the Club offered insight into how one community organization can effectively create favorable outcomes among youth. On an institutional level, the Club works to prevent delinquency by implementing a mission statement that prioritizes youth safety and development and by organizing programs that maintain youth interest and offer educational and career exploration support. The Club staff also creates a culture of safety and positivity and focuses on character and self-development. Through interactions with youth, both staff and mentors develop relationships that influence youth through guidance, accountability, and mentoring. This in-depth study of institutional structure, culture, and staff/youth interactions demonstrated the value in mentoring youth through programs focusing on education and offering opportunities for youth to succeed as methods to prevent or reduce delinquency.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. The Boys and Girls Club is a useful resource for research due to its long and reputable history and its evidence-based programs, which offer a wealth of data for this in-depth case study. This study consists of interviews with the Club staff persons and former Club members, as well as content analysis of documents for the purpose of examining how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. Additionally, I explore the perceptions of staff and previous members on the effectiveness of services. To address the specific components in the study, I asked the following research question: In what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth? To answer this question, I asked the following interview questions: What techniques and strategies do staff consider to be most successful in preventing delinquent behavior, and why? What is the impact of these techniques on the lives of participants? What choices have former program participants made to indicate they have avoided delinquent behavior?

Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention in National and Local Contexts

Nationally, the overall juvenile delinquency rate has declined by nearly half since 1980 where the rate per 100,000 was about 6,500 for youth ages 10-17. Law enforcement and juvenile crime. (2015, February 10). Retrieved from URL http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime. In 2014, the national rate of juveniles arrested dropped to about 3,000 per 100,000. Even though

delinquency rates peaked in 1996 to about 8,500 per 100,000, rates have steadily declined to the current rate of 3,000 per 100,000.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17, 1980-2014
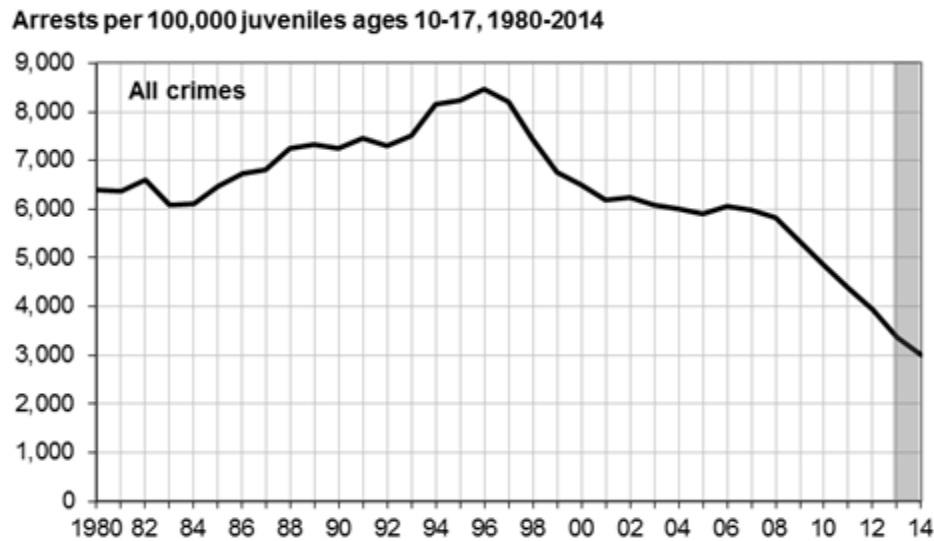
Figure 1. Juvenile arrest rates for all crimes, 1980-2014.
Retrieved from http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime.

As displayed in Figure 1, since 1980, property crimes such as burglary, larceny-theft, vehicle theft and arson for juveniles ages 10-17 have steadily declined from about 2,363 per 100,000 to a new low of 693 per 100,000. Similarly, violent crimes including homicides, aggravated assault, robbery, and rape have all dropped from a peak of 497.4 per 100,000 in 1995 to 157.8 per 100,000 in 2014. Among these offenses, the most notable category with a decrease in delinquency is drunkenness, which had a rate of 144.8 in 1980 and 19.3 in 2014 per 100,000. Law enforcement and juvenile crime. (2015, February 10). Retrieved from URL http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime. Additionally, offenses including curfew, disorderly conduct, running away, drunkenness, liquor law violations, drug offenses, driving under the influence, weapons law violations, vandalism and simple assault have not declined dramatically, but have gradually declined since 1996 where the peak rate was 742.7 per 100,000. In 1980, the

rate of delinquency was 276.3 per 100,000 which was the lowest rate recorded by the Office of

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In 1980, the rates for overall delinquency were

6396.6 per 100,000, which is more than double the rate for 2014 which is 3008.1 per 100,000

Law enforcement and juvenile crime. (2015, February 10). Retrieved from URL

http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime. The rate of other assaults, which includes harassments,

simple, and aggravated assaults in 2014 with a rate of 407.5 per 100,000 is nearly double the rate

for the same category in 1980 where this same category had a rate of 276.3 per 100,000.

Greenwood (2012) defined delinquency prevention as "the wider universe of programs

and services that seek to reduce the likelihood that youth will become delinquent or adult

criminals" (p. 495). Juvenile delinquency prevention strives to re-direct youth away from

criminal behaviors and the environments that breed negativity through efforts such as mentoring,

counseling, character development, and encouraging education (Greenwood, 2012). While youth

programs have existed in some form for over one hundred years, researchers suggest that

programs dedicated to the prevention of juvenile delinquency are a somewhat new development

(Greenwood, 2012; Hawkins & Weis, 1985).

Hawkins and Weis (1985) described the historical context of juvenile delinquency

programs as having a control function, or a reactive approach to delinquent behaviors, in that

program designs are reactive to delinquency problems after an act or crime has been committed

rather than preventing youth from committing crimes in the first place. Newly implemented in

2000, the preventative approach, on the other hand, identifies causes of delinquency or the

potential of youth to commit crimes (Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Mendel, 2000). The preventative

approach consists of two categories: 1) general juvenile programs to deter delinquency through

primary prevention, or 2) early intervention programs targeting at-risk youth with a higher

propensity to engage in delinquent behavior (Hawkins & Weis, 1985). The following

distinctions describe how these two types of juvenile programs are structured.

According to Goldstein, Glick, Gibbs (1998), an increased emphasis on prevention

contributes to delinquency reduction. As shown above, nationally, juvenile delinquency rates are

declining overall. A 2011 report from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention

notes a 29% decrease in overall violent crime between 2006 and 2011. This same study noted

that "community-based supervision programs had a favorable effect on juveniles because most of

the juveniles in the program were less likely to be arrested and more likely to continue working,

and attend school" (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014, p.72). The researchers stated that continued

participation in community programs that include support services increases the likelihood for

success for juvenile participants.

On the other hand, some researchers have attributed decreasing juvenile crime rates to

harsher legal rulings such as sentencing juveniles to adult prisons, thus reducing violent crime

since these offenders, who are incarcerated or placed on probation for extended periods of time,

are removed from society (McNulty, 1995). Zimring and Rushin (2013) argued that there is little

empirical evidence to support the argument that harsher sentences for juveniles influenced the

decrease in delinquency rates. Researchers generally agree that there is no single factor or action

in the recent past that is solely responsible for reducing delinquency rates.

According to Greenwood (2008), lack of funding during the past 15 to20 years forced

many government agencies to conduct cost-benefit analyses, coupled with community

evaluations using evidence-based practices, to determine whether juvenile incarceration methods

were effective in preventing crime and reducing recidivism. Ultimately, many communities

recognized that community-based efforts using preventative and deterrent programs were more

cost effective than juvenile incarceration (Greenwood, 2008). Furthermore, nationwide data-sharing, and cooperation among many states with similar interests in program development, (including New York, Florida, North Carolina, Arizona, Washington, and Pennsylvania) have created valuable nationwide networks for assessing delinquency programs (Greenwood, 2008).

Research evidence demonstrates how efforts to reduce delinquency rates create cost savings from reduced incarceration as well as other associated benefits. These include a decrease in victimization, cost and work force savings for law enforcement, and reductions in court administration costs and processing, among other benefits. Despite this evidence, Pennsylvania is one of the states that has been slow to embrace juvenile delinquency prevention programs.

In Pennsylvania, the juvenile delinquency rates have collectively declined since 1996 when there were peak high rates of delinquency, but violent crimes such as robbery, auto theft and arson continue to be disproportionately above the national averages (Chilenski, Bumbarger, Kyler, & Greenberg, 2007). According to the Juvenile Court Judges Commission 2015 Pennsylvania juvenile court dispositions report, "There were 25,568 delinquency-related dispositions in Pennsylvania during 2014" including formal placements, consent decrees, direct file, and juvenile probation (Steele & Clark, 2015). This "includes a 33.9% decrease in delinquency placement which is an 11.7% decrease from 2013, and a 30.2% decrease since 2010" (Steele & Clark, 2014, p. 4). In 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Juvenile Probation processed 12,260 cases requiring juvenile probation services (Steele & Clark, 2015). In 2012, there were 13,251 cases and 2011 had 14,849 (Steele & Clark, 2015). These figures indicate a significant yet steady decrease in the number of juvenile cases (Steele & Clark, 2015). Since 2004, 162,622 cases were handled by county juvenile probation officers with an 85% success rate (Steele & Clark, 2015).

According to Chilenski et al. (2007), programs providing post-arrest services contribute to reducing juvenile recidivism in Pennsylvania, but more recently, since 2005 the trend has been to utilize a preventative approach to juvenile delinquency by addressing risk factors. A risk factor is defined as an element such as a "characteristic, variable, or hazard that, if present for a given individual, makes it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder" (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994, p. 127). Some of the risk factors addressed in this study are family, poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure, and support and exposure to violence and crime. Risk factors are discussed in detail later in this study. Recognizing and addressing risk factors is one way to reduce the likelihood of delinquency for youth. Enhancing protective factors to insulate juveniles from delinquency is one way to eliminate or reduce risk factors. Mrazek and Haggerty (1994) stated, "Protective factors include such things as close bonds with positive adults and prosocial peers, having a resilient temperament, strong families, and good decision-making and problem-solving skills" (p. 14).

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is the primary government agency leading efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency through funding, training, scientific research and continued support in program development. Their website and current request for funding proposals suggest that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania encourages evidence-based programs using a protective approach and scientific program evaluation methods that address risk factors for preventing juvenile delinquency. As a whole, Pennsylvania's juvenile delinquency efforts are leaning more towards being proactive rather than reactive. Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention (May, 2015). Retrieved from URL http://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/default.aspx.

The Boys and Girls Clubs in a Historical Context

In 1860, three women named Alice Goodwin, Mary Goodwin, and Elizabeth Hammersley were concerned for the welfare of neighborhood boys lingering on the streets and created a positive alternative, which eventually turned into the first Boys Club. Our mission and story. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL https://www.bgca.org/about-us/our-mission-story. In 1906, 53 Federated Boys Clubs in Boston were created, sparking a nationwide undertaking. Our mission and story. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL https://www.bgca.org/about-us/our-mission-story. The notion of offering a safe, fun, and supportive environment grew into a nationwide, structured organization for young people. The Boys Club became The Boys Club of America in 1931 and later, in 1990, it was renamed The Boys and Girls Club of America to acknowledge that girls are also part of the Club's mission. Today, the Boys and Girls Club is a nationwide network of over 4,100 Clubs, located in inner cities, rural and native lands, and in public schools and military installations. The Clubs serve youth aged 6-18 with a philosophy based on five key operational elements: "1) a safe positive environment; 2) fun; 3) supportive relationships; 4) opportunities and expectations, and 5) recognition" (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014). These elements are the backdrop for the Boys and Girls Club programs, the program designs promote educational success, professional and character development, and an overall healthy lifestyle (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014).

The Harrisburg Boys and Girls Clubs

In the city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, there are very few delinquency prevention programs. The YMCA of Harrisburg has some programs for youth, but the structured programs require adjudication as a pre-requisite for participation. Several faith-based entities have youth programs in churches and places of worship, but these programs incorporate religion into their

programming. The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg fulfills the need for secular youth development and delinquency prevention programs.

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg is a non-profit organization founded in 1939 with one location serving a small group of boys who participated in sports and after-school activities. Over the years, the Club has grown to include three locations serving 1,264 members with numerous extra-curricular, educational, and character-building programs and activities. Currently, a variety of activities including sports, recreational, scholastic and educational programs, and social development and skill-building programs are among the activities offered to Boys and Girls Club members whose ages range from toddlers to young adults.

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg depends on over 300 volunteers as well as 18 paid trained professional staff to address the needs of the youth through a variety of programs. While each program has a central theme and focus centered around particular goals, all of the programs share a common goal to "promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014)." As a community resource where young people can seek help for social and personal needs to grow and develop into productive young citizens, the Boys and Girls Club offers programs in personal development, educational support, family strengthening practices, and community commitment. The environment, staff, and ambiance work in tandem to create a positive and safe setting for youth to evolve and grow by giving them the opportunity to succeed About us. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/about-us.html).

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg offers ten programs tailored towards girls and/or boys using specific models for particular age groups, interests, activities, and prevention programs. For example, the "SMART girls" program encourages girls ages 10-15 to develop

healthy habits, build positive self-esteem, and develop into successful young women. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Similarly, the "Keystone Club" program seeks to "develop leadership, community service, and career exploration among children ages 14-18 years old, teaching youth through exploration and personal development by having small groups create activities which focus on the community, education and career development, business, and social recreation." Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).

Programs in the fine arts and the environment, and an after-school "powerhour" focus on developing creativity, and providing social and structural support for each participant (www.bcga.org). These programs allow participants time to develop social skills while learning about whatever may pique their interest. For example, the Passport to Manhood, Triple Play, and Junior Staff Development programs offer skill-building for the work force, community commitment, volunteering and leadership development, among many other skills, to prepare teens and young adults for the work force and ultimately for college and beyond. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).

The final three programs focus on inspiring teens to graduate by helping them prepare for the college application process and informing teens aged 12-18 on positive career choices to prepare for their future. Club Tech is a program designed to teach young people proper usage of technology resources to further their career and educational choices. Lastly, the fine arts exhibit program for youth aged 6-18 focuses on creative expression through art and encouraging youth to participate in a national art show.

An objective of the Boys and Girls Club is to inform youth about how to make good choices in their behavior, physical health, and education. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Targeted efforts to develop personal responsibility and decision-making are integral elements in many of the individual and group programs, along with the positive influence of mentors and staff to guide the young participants in their journeys. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). The collective goal of all of the Boys and Girls Clubs is to offer a positive environment for youth to flourish while acquiring skills that are essential for personal development and growth into successful adulthood (www.bcga.org).

The population served by the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg encompasses the greater City of Harrisburg area. The 2010 United States census shows that 26.8% of the City of Harrisburg population is under the age of 18, of which 52.4% is Black or African-American, 30.7% is White, and 18% is Latino, with the remainder of the population being Asian or multi-racial. United States census bureau. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216. This ethnically diverse group of young people is in need of an array of services. Nearly half of the population under 18 (47.9%) lives under the poverty rate. Some of these youth are homeless, or they live in foster homes or shelters because of intervention by Children and Youth Services or circumstances in their lives. Others live in single-parent homes, or with one or multiple relatives other than their parents. These living environments are associated with several risk factors for youth: unstable homes with no reliable living arrangements can lead to food insecurity, a lack of safety and security in their homes and neighborhoods, among many others.

According to the Director of Operations at the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club, other risk factors shared by Club participants include a lack of educational support such as assistance with homework or school-related projects, limited opportunity for and participation in extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, and the arts, unstable home environments, and financial constraints.

Problem Statement

Community development programs with a focus on youth development and juvenile delinquency prevention are primarily available in urban settings for adjudicated youth across the nation. In Harrisburg, most youth programs are exclusively for adjudicated youth on county-mandated probation with few structured programs available for youth in suburban and residential neighborhoods. Many of the existing programs for delinquent or at-risk youth in Harrisburg require adjudication or a prior arrest as a requirement for eligibility.

Waiting for youth to commit crimes and to enter the criminal justice system before providing them with positive youth development services results in undermining young people's development. This delay is also costly. The value of youth delinquency prevention programs is not a priority in the Harrisburg community despite several studies highlighting the need for youth programs to promote community development (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Jenson &Howard, 1998; Mazerolle,Wickes,& McBroom, 2009). Community involvement, character development, educational support, and recreational activities for youth are all strategies that encourage and support youth to succeed, and studies show that these factors prevent juvenile delinquency (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2009; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Mazerolle et al., 2009).

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg seeks to fill the void and lead the way for delinquency prevention programs in Harrisburg. The Harrisburg Club has several programs,

activities, and opportunities that focus on positive youth development and that support not only at-risk and adjudicated youth but also young people unattached to the juvenile justice system who want to participate in a community program. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).

Because Harrisburg lacks delinquency prevention programs for young people and the Boys and Girls Club is the only site that offers youth development with the aim of preventing delinquency, it is important to learn how the site operates and the impact it has on its participants and on the community. Youth programs play an instrumental role in building communities by investing in future citizens through programs promoting leadership, education, and community (Chung & Steinberg, 2006). This study examined how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes.

Researcher Position

My interest in studying the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg stems from my experience as a police officer with a passion for reducing juvenile delinquency. In my tenure as an officer, I have seen the need for systemic changes in Harrisburg community organizations, which often neglect the needs of young people. More specifically, in my experience, I have learned that young people commit crimes when they do not have productive things to do and when they lack relationships with individuals and mentors who can guide them down a path of positive behavior. Most community organizations in Harrisburg do not serve young people, and those that do often lack a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence delinquency. Additionally, I believe youth organizations must also shift their focus to prevention, rather than rehabilitation after an arrest, as a more logical approach to youth development.

As a police officer working in the Harrisburg area, I have had contact with many juveniles throughout the years. My personal experiences have revealed that the many of the issues involving delinquent juveniles derive from problems in their social environment. Some of these issues include conflicts with parents or caretakers in their homes, a lack of a stable home life or structured environment, failure to build social relationships with peers and adults, and an overall lack of understanding of personal responsibility.

I have noticed that youth involved in community activities, extra-curricular activities in schools, and volunteer programs appear more likely to refrain from delinquent activity. Conversely, the youth who are not involved in any activities are often reprimanded for disorderly behavior in their neighborhoods, have been arrested multiple times, and are more frequently involved in juvenile delinquency than are those who are involved in community activities.

Throughout the years, I have seen some delinquent youth change from negative to positive behavior when they become involved in activities through juvenile probation, which mandates community service, part-time employment, and/or structured programs or activities. The structure offered by the mandated programs is comparable to that of the Boys and Girls Club, which seeks prevention through participation in programs and activities. Positive adult influences and/ or nurturing social guidance are often absent from the lives of delinquent youth. A guided effort to fill the voids in the lives of these youth can have a significant impact on their future.

Being a police officer in Harrisburg has given me personal insight into some of the issues that create a favorable environment for juvenile delinquency in the city. The juveniles and their families with whom I have had contact throughout the years have revealed to me that when youth are positively involved in community and extra-curricular programs with school, churches and

other organizations, they are less inclined to partake in delinquent behavior. Similarly, those youths that are arrested and ultimately sentenced to community service as part of juvenile probation tend to abstain from delinquent behavior after being mentored, guided, and coached by their probation officers. In my experience, I have come to believe that the structure and experiences offered by community programs act as a deterrent for juveniles who are otherwise likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This dissertation includes an in-depth analysis of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg, focusing on the organization's efforts to serve youth in the Harrisburg area to prevent delinquency. Studying the activities, methods, and inner workings of the Boys and Girls Club offers insight into how one community organization can effectively create favorable outcomes among youth in Harrisburg.

Using a case study approach, I examined the following research questions:

Overall question: In what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth? To answer this question, I explore the perceptions of staff and former members by asking:

- What techniques and strategies are most successful in preventing delinquent behavior, and why?
- What is the impact of this program on the lives of the participants?
- What choices have participants made that indicate that they have avoided engaging in delinquent behavior?

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg is the only site in the Harrisburg area that offers youth development programs that address delinquency prevention. Other services that exist to help youth and their families require adjudication as a prerequisite to participation. There is a clear need to offer opportunities for youth to refrain from delinquent behavior in a safe and positive environment, so it is important to examine how the Boys and Girls Club serves youth.

Studying how staff and former Club participants perceive their experiences and program outcomes is important because youth programs play an instrumental role in building communities and investing in future citizen leaders (Chung & Steinberg, 2006). This study revealed the effective strategies employed by the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg, which can be used as a model for future and/or additional youth development programs, locally and/or nationally. In addition, exploring areas where the program might fall short can help to strengthen existing Boys and Girls Club programs and serve as a model for other local and national programs.

In this chapter, I provided some historical background of juvenile delinquency prevention including nationwide data and data from Pennsylvania. The background description helps to illustrate the problem and explains why juvenile delinquency prevention is necessary. The researcher position offers insight into my own perspective as the researcher, and lastly, the purpose and objective of the study outlined the rationale for conducting this study and my overall goals.

In Chapter 2, I explored the literature on risk factors leading to delinquency, delinquency theories relevant to this study, model juvenile delinquency prevention programs, and I show how these theories and concepts support my overall research question.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I first examine literature on risk factors for delinquency. Next, I evaluate

theories explaining causes of delinquency, including social bonding, social disorganization

theory, strain theory, and differential opportunity and routine activities theories. I then discuss

factors that mitigate delinquency. Next, I discuss effective delinquency prevention models,

which include models that utilize community-based program design, community structure and

organization, collaboration with other organizations, and effective organizational leaders. Lastly,

I summarize characteristics of effective delinquency prevention programs. The chapter concludes

with a conceptual framework of the study and summary.

Risk Factors for Delinquency

To understand how the Boys and Girls Club works to prevent delinquency, one must first

understand the risk factors for delinquency as substantiated by the literature. A risk factor is

defined as an element such as a "characteristic, variable, or hazard that, if present for a given

individual, makes it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the

general population, will develop a disorder" (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994, p. 127). Criminological

theorists generally agree that risk factors such as family, poor education, aggressive behavior,

lack of family structure, and support and exposure to violence and crime create burdens and

barriers to opportunities, reducing the chance of an individual becoming productive and

successful (Shaw & McKay, 1969; Weatherburn & Lind, 2006; Worrall, 2004).

Researchers consider numerous issues within the family unit to be risk factors

contributing to the likelihood that a youth may engage in delinquency; these include the single

parent family, domestic violence, lack of family support and encouragement in school and extra-curricular activities, low socio-economic status, and alcohol and drug abuse (Shader, 2001).

Traditionally, a safe, stable, supportive home environment where a young person can flourish without concern for his/her own well-being on a day-to-day basis is the ideal environment for a child (Shader, 2001). Siegel (1998) suggested that children who receive "fair discipline, care and support from parents who provide them with strong, positive role models" are more inclined to refrain from delinquency (p. 197). Numerous studies have shown that a child's domestic family influences play a role in the social behavior of that child (Jaffe & Baker, 1998; Shader, 2001; Siegel, 1998). Exposure to violence, particularly within the home, inspires negative behavior, which can lead to crime and delinquency (Jaffe & Baker, 1998; Shader, 2001; Siegel, 1998).

Jaffe and Baker (1998) stated that "being abused directly or witnessing violence in childhood is a powerful factor in predicting future violence" (p. 25). The psychological influences of abuse and violence are lasting, thus creating a stronger likelihood for an individual who was abused as a child to engage in violence as a young adult/adult (Jaffe & Baker, 1998). Studies of offenders, such as by Hotaling and Sugarman (1986), indicate that childhood violence is a strong predictor of domestic violence as an adult. Maxfield and Widom (1996) also demonstrated that exposure to violence as a child is correlated to engaging in violent crime in adulthood. Another study of 250 boys by Shader (2000) revealed that the strongest predictor of violent behavior for adult offenders was abusive parenting which includes lack of supervision, harsh punishment, and a single-parent household (McCord, 1979; Shader, 2000). These studies support arguments for addressing violence in the lives of children (Jaffe & Baker, 1998) and the

logic behind the use of protective or preventative approaches, such as family services, to help parents who are less knowledgeable or overwhelmed by parenting.

Another important risk factor to discuss regarding juvenile delinquency is poor education. Siegel (1998) explained that educational failure is "a significant predictor of crime and delinquency" (p.197). The results of 118 studies on student achievement in school suggest that students who perform poorly in school are less likely to have a desire to engage in higher education due to the stigma associated with their lack of achievement (p. 197). Additionally, participation in the social aspects of education such as interaction with teachers, staff, and other students, and a general interest in social activities, are all associated with resistance to delinquency (Siegel, 1998). Educational institutions are also often responsible for community programs, as well as outreach, prevention, treatment and counseling programs to help families sustain positive and stable living environments. These programs address quality-of-life issues and promote goals that eventually may lead students to attain a favorable socio-economic status.

Unfortunately, financial cuts in educational programs in impoverished neighborhoods relying on education as a means of preventing delinquency becomes a challenge. When cuts are made to educational budgets, and employment positions are eliminated or go unfilled in order to reduce overall costs, school employees are often less effective, and their work may suffer. In attempting to do more with fewer resources, students with the direst needs often fall through the cracks as resources that would have otherwise been directed to them are either non-existent or are re-directed toward other projects, and greater numbers become involved in the criminal justice system.

Cost-benefit analyses have been consistent throughout the years in demonstrating the benefits of basic education when compared to re-entry programs and rehabilitation for offenders.

Greenwood (2008) noted that "It costs states billions a year to arrest, prosecute, incarcerate, and treat juvenile offenders. Investing in successful delinquency-prevention programs can save taxpayers seven to ten dollars for every dollar invested, primarily in the form of reduced spending on prisons. (p.185)."

In considering budgets for education as compared to the costs required to deal with the consequences of cutting educational opportunities, one must consider all of factors affecting delinquency prevention. One major piece of the equation frequently overlooked is that crime reduction and prevention resulting from an effective educational system will reduce spending on the criminal justice system. Conversely, cost savings in education can produce enormous additional costs in the criminal justice system, starting with law enforcement and the courts, and flowing into corrections, probation and parole, and all the agencies involved with processing those who commit crimes (Greenwood, 2008).

The correlation between criminal behavior and education is well established by academic researchers such as Lochner (2004) and Wallin (1996) who both conducted scientific studies on the correlations between reduced funding for educational programs and increased incarceration rates. Lochner (2004) concluded that those who are less educated are more likely to commit crimes as juveniles. Similarly, Wallin (1996) noted that ensuring safety by funding prisons is preferred over funding early education programs such as day care and pre-kindergarten programs.

In his study of education and crime, Lochner (2004) noted that there are great differences in the frequency of participation in violent crimes and crimes against property across educational groups. The study focused on developing human capital as a means of reducing crime (Lochner, 2004). The author argued that by investing in human resources, much like investing in any

business venture or tangible item, individuals are more likely to contribute positively to society (Lochner, 2004). This theoretical framework supports many criminological theories such as social bonding theory, differential opportunity theory, strain theory and social disorganization theory, in which a key component is education and, specifically, the availability of viable educational programs for individuals for reducing the propensity to engage in criminal activity.

Aggressive behavior is another risk factor that can lead a young person to engage in delinquency. "The manifestation of aggressive tendencies, theorized to be a result of maladaptive coping to adversity, leads to later antisocial behaviors, including delinquency" (Green, Gesten, Greenwald, & Salcedo, 2008, p.327-328).

Despite the scientific data that supports the predictability of risk factors in determining the likelihood that a child will become delinquent, there is no guarantee that a particular risk factor will predict what a child may or may not do (Brandt, 2008). Risk factors offer a guide for how to mitigate potential hazards and issues in a child's future. Offering protective measures such as a safe home, food, tutoring, mentoring and nurturing, to shield a child from potentially harmful elements in his or her life is a proactive approach towards delinquency prevention (Brandt, 2008; Siegel, 1998). The skill in using risk factors for delinquency prevention efforts lies in addressing all of a child's needs based on an assessment of all potential risk factors with a focus on their age, habits, and culture.

Recognizing the presence of risk factors such as poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure and support, and exposure to violence and crime is one of the initial steps in understanding what may cause a young person to be more inclined to participate in delinquent behavior. A child raised in substandard conditions, where resources such as encouragement, a strong adult support system, and educational support systems are mediocre, indicates that he or

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she is not likely to thrive without adequate support systems to minimize risk factors that may lead to delinquency.

Similarly, educational support is key to delinquency prevention since having a quality education plays an essential role in overall youth development, which eventually contributes to delinquency prevention. Positive family influences are equally important. When a child is exposed to domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of social support, neglect, and exposure to crime, the likelihood of delinquency for a child increases because of the detrimental exposure to illicit activity (Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Mann & Reynolds, 2006). Lastly, the ability to create and sustain social relationships contributes to successful youth development (Mann & Reynolds, 2006).

Positive social skills contribute to delinquency prevention. These include how a child comports him or herself with others, the use of proper communication skills and social involvement with peers, adults and the community in general. The presence of one or more risk factors such as poverty, poor education, troubled family life, and a lack of positive social skills contribute to the disparities between at-risk youth and youth that are not exposed to multiple risk factors (Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Mann & Reynolds, 2006; Shader, 2001).

Primary prevention and early intervention program models share a reliance on the analysis of risk factors for developing programs suitable for their target population. A risk factor is defined as a "characteristic, variable, or hazard that, if present for a given individual, makes it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder" (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994, p. 127). Farrington (2000) stated that once risk factors are identified, an effective model for neutralizing those risk factors should be initiated (Shader, 2001). Historically, in criminological research, risk factors are predictors of criminal

behavior since risk factors identify persons who were likely to engage in such behavior. More recently, however, identifying risk factors is a means of creating proactive, preventative measures to deter those youth who are likely to have a higher propensity to engage in delinquency (Shader, 2001). While no single risk factor on its own can predict if a juvenile will become delinquent, the presence of several risk factors is expected to increase the likelihood that a youth will become delinquent (Shader, 2001).

Any substantive program that seeks to improve the quality of life of a child must first conduct an assessment to gather information on that individual's past experiences, knowledge, and capabilities. It is important to recognize all of the risk factors that may be present for a youth. Ideally, this assessment will reveal data to explain how and why risk factors are present (if at all) for that individual. As a whole, information gathered by identifying risk factors offers a baseline for understanding the problems that are important to recognize to help youth refrain from delinquency.

Brandt (2008) noted that "once the risk factors associated with a particular disorder are identified, it becomes possible to develop strategies to respond to a problem" (p. 109). In the case of juvenile delinquency, identifying risk factors such as poverty, poor education, and aggressive behavior, lack of family structure and support, and exposure to violence and crime is critical for creating programs to prevent delinquent behavior. Once the risk factors have been determined, a comprehensive preventative program will implement activities that mitigate risk factors for the purpose of preventing juveniles from engaging in delinquent behavior (Brandt, 2008). This approach is embraced as a preventative method that saves time and money (Goldstein et al., 2013). Investing in youth by initially offering the skills and opportunities that

allow them to thrive offers a better return on investment than post-arrest programs in youth facilities.

Social researchers generally agree that exposure to multiple risk factors increases the probability for delinquency (Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Shader, 2000). Goldstein et al. (2013) provided examples of youth who were living in poverty with mediocre educational opportunities and a lack of social support systems, in which delinquency was a likely outcome. Herrenkohl et al. (2000) reported that "a 10-year-old exposed to six or more risk factors is 10 times as likely to commit a violent act by age 18 as a 10-year-old exposed to only one risk factor" (p. 176). A comprehensive recognition of risk factors and methods to mitigate the presence of risk factors is part of program development and implementation in delinquency prevention programs (Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano & Harachi, 1998; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Shader, 2000).

Proper analysis and recognition of risk factors is essential to delinquency prevention since risk factors contribute to the disparities between at-risk youth and youth that are not at risk. A practical understanding of how and why youth gravitate towards delinquency helps to explain why a juvenile needs to engage in structured delinquency prevention programs for a chance to lead a better life. A theoretical foundation lays the framework for a healthy understanding of the causes of delinquency (Nation et al., 2003). Using theories such as social disorganization, differential opportunity theory, strain theory, and routine activities helps to illustrate risk factors that may eventually lead to delinquency (Miao, Umemoto, Gonda, & Hishinuma, (2011). Additionally, understanding the role of culture to account for why certain communities have not been able to deter delinquent behaviors and lifestyles explains why differential opportunity, strain, and routine activities theories are still relevant (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988).

In the next section, I review theories that attempt to explain causes of delinquency. I first discuss social bonding theory to explain how building social bonds or relationships with youth improve their chances to succeed. Second, I discuss social disorganization theory to explain how community disorganization can create a climate for delinquency. Third, I discuss strain and differential opportunity theory, which addresses how individuals respond to disorganization and lack of opportunities in their communities. Additionally, differential opportunity theory is helpful for understanding how a lack of opportunity in a community creates a climate that prompts delinquency. Finally, I discuss routine activities theory, which posits that a lack of supervision for at-risk youth coupled with the vulnerability of potential victims and the existence of opportunities to commit a crime are all factors in creating an environment that encourages crime and delinquency (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hoffman & Ireland, 2004; Siegel, 1998).

Theories Explaining Causes of Delinquency

To understand the effectiveness of community-based programs on mitigating delinquency, I drew on social bonding, social disorganization, strain, differential opportunity, and routine activities theory to create a theoretical framework for understanding why juvenile delinquency occurs. In addition, I discuss factors that mitigate delinquency, and community culture and environmental structure theories to explain how juvenile delinquency is preventable by being aware of local circumstances that may create environments conducive to delinquency. Learning more about these theories is germane to this study because these are all elements that contribute to favorable effective outcomes in delinquency prevention programs such as those serving at-risk and adjudicated youth at the Boys and Girls Club.

Social Bonding Theory

Social bonding theory is a micro level theory that explains how a person's relationship or bond to a person or entity affects (or does not affect) delinquency, which includes cultural and interactional relationships. The major premise of Hirschi's original social bonding theory holds that delinquency occurs when someone fails to establish or develop a social relationship to a person, community, or organization (Hirschi, 2002). "Hirschi's concept of a "social bond" is comprised of the following four elements: (1) attachment, (2) commitment, (3) involvement, and (4) beliefs(Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995, p.1)." The element of attachment refers to a person's attachment to society as a whole (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). Commitment describes the connections between a person and social activities and institutions (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). This element refers to engagement in community activities, schools, and social clubs. Connecting with social entities creates ties with one's community that helps to develop social networks. Involvement relates to structured participation in a task or activity such as employment where a person is likely to be occupied with a purpose (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). The final element of beliefs refers to the social norms and values of one's society (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). Hirschi (1969) explains, "Social bonds tie individuals to the conventional belief, values and activities, of their parents, teacher, employers and peers" (as cited by Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999, p.10, 16). Any variation or wavering away from these relationships can negatively affect one's decision-making, thus improving the likelihood of deviant behavior (Wright et al, 1999.

Social bonds or ties are what drive an individual away from deviance (Hirschi, 1969). Hirschi explained, "according to *control* or bond theories, a person is free to commit delinquent acts because his ties to the conventional order have somehow been broken" (1969, p. 1). In

citing Hirschi (1969), Longshore, Chang, Hsieh, and Messina (2004) explained that "in social bonding theory, the primary explanatory factors for deviant conduct are weak social bonds—specifically, poor attachment to others, low involvement in conventional activities, lack of commitment to a conventional lifestyle, and low endorsement of conventional moral belief (p. 544)."

In describing Hirschi's social bonding theory, Chriss (2007) explained that people who have strong and abiding attachments to conventional society (in the form of attachments, involvement, investment, and belief) are less likely to deviate than persons who have weak or shallow bonds. Social bonding theory explains that social bonding is key in preventing deviance because the relationships formed through social bonding influence decision making when contemplating between deviant behavior and a more reasonable option (Chriss, 2007; Hirschi, 1969). This theory expresses that the relationships or bonds formed through attachment, involvement, investment and belief are instrumental factors in the decision making process and thus positively influence an individual to make more informed decisions to avoid deviance (Hirschi, 1969). As a whole, social bonding theory acknowledges the importance of the bond formed through relationships as the key component in a person's decision to refrain from deviance (Hirschi, 1969).

For over 30 years, social bonding theory was a model for explaining deviance, which began with Hirschi's study on deviance published in 1969. Hirschi's study used a combination of data from the Richmond Youth Project, which had a population of 17,500 high school and junior high school students from the San Francisco area. Hirschi (2001) gathered data from "school records, a questionnaire completed by the students, and police records (p. 39)." Hirschi (2001) sought to analyze the relationship between social bonding elements such as attachment,

involvement in social activities, and delinquency. The key question sought to answer is not why do youth engage in delinquency, but why don't youth decide to engage in delinquency. (Hirschi, 2001). The findings revealed that social bonds are an integral part of a youth's decision-making process not to engage in delinquency (Hirschi, 2001).

As Hirschi (2001) further developed the theoretical model for social bonding theory, the emergence of self-control became more prevalent in the theory. Hirschi (2001) theorized that self-control, or one's cognizant decision to engage in a particular behavior is essential in explaining deviant behavior. Bouffard and Rice (2011) explain that "Hirschi's (2004) statement on the relationship between social bonds and decisional self-control suggests that Hirschi saw elements of the social bond as at least one of the factors influencing the amount of self-control expressed within a given decision" (p.140). Furthermore, Bouffard and Rice (2011) acknowledged that Hirschi's theoretical developments on self-control and social bond explain the influences social bonds have on a person while he or she is making a decision.

In examining self-control and decision-making in relation to social bond theory, Bouffard and Rice (2011) conducted a qualitative study of 311 criminal justice college students in a mid-western college of 12,000 students where the students were asked about deciding to drive after consuming drugs and/or alcohol during various scenarios. The study further questioned the students about whether they would consider the opinion of their parents, peers, teachers, or others in their decision making process or after the incident to determine whether these relationships and opinions influenced self-control (Bouffard & Rice, 2011). Bouffard and Rice (2011) found that "a situational (decisional) measure of self-control not only predicts offending, but is influenced by the extent of one's social bonding" (p. 151). The researchers explain that

this study is important because it describes how "social bonds work to influence offending likelihood" (Bouffard & Rice, 2011, p.151).

Bouffard and Rice's (2011) study is an example of how Hirschi's social bonding theory reflects self-control in terms of decision making when considering whether or not to commit a crime. Ultimately, the data revealed that social bonds do play a role in a person's decision-making process when contemplating whether to commit a crime (Bouffard & Rice, 2011). Further analysis showed that social bonds were evident in the decision making process when a person considered the cause and effect of their actions because various elements such as consideration of the law and opinion of their teacher were considered by respondents in their thought processes (Bouffard & Rice, 2011). Bouffard and Rice's (2011) study is germane to this study because it helps one understand the importance of creating an environment where a youth can build or develop existing social bonds as a mediation tool to prevent delinquency. By creating positive social bonds through the Boys and Girls Club for example, youth may learn how to use positive social tools learned through their social bonds and relationship such as communication skills and education to ponder his or her decisions whether positive or negative.

Wright et al. (1999) also conducted a study to analyze whether social relationships or existing personal characteristics influence delinquency. Their study analyzed whether social bonds influence self-control. This study is relevant because the methodology directly addresses Hirschi's theories of social bond and self-control. Wright et al. (1999) conducted a longitudinal study that began with 1,037 youth at age three with 2 year analyses (e.g. age 5, 7, 9, up to 21) of this same population sample that varied from 850 to 1,008 throughout the study. The key variables measured were self-control and social bonding as described by Hirschi. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between social bonds and self-control during childhood

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to delinquency and criminal behavior in adulthood (Wright et al., 1999). The study found "the effect of self-control on crime was largely mediated by social bonds (Wright et al., 1999, p. 1). Furthermore, Wright et al.'s (1999) "findings support the value of social interventions in childhood and adolescence (p.26)". As a whole, Wright et al.'s (1999) study supports this study by recognizing that social bonds are vital in preventing delinquency from childhood, thus stressing the importance of social bonding and relationship building in childhood.

The studies of Bouffard and Rice (2011) and Wright et al. (1999) support Hirschi's theoretical model which "suggests that the effects of attachment are the same in all class segments of the population: the stronger the attachment, the less likely the child is to be delinquent (Hirschi, 2001, p. 229). While understanding how attachment is relevant to delinquency prevention is at the core of the study, Hirschi acknowledged that his analysis lacked sufficient scrutiny in understanding the effect of delinquent peers on deciding whether to engage in delinquent acts. Additionally, a review of status offenses "such as smoking, drinking, dating, and driving a car" should have been incorporated to better understand why particular offenses were more appealing than others when he or she was contemplating delinquency (Hirschi, 2001, p. 231).

Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory is relevant to this study because this theory offers a macro level perspective including structural and institutional analyses of how crime affects people in their surroundings. For the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg, social disorganization theory helps to illuminate how the elements present in the Harrisburg region affects the opportunities for crime in the lives of youth in Harrisburg.

Social disorganization theory associates crime with a community environment in which schools, family, and commercial establishments are functioning poorly (Siegel, 1998). The tenets of this theory developed in the 1920s when sociological researchers began to focus on urban neighborhoods in United States cities where immigration and cultural changes resulted in a clustering of ethnic minorities with diminished socioeconomic opportunities (Siegel, 1998). Researchers found that the lack of a structured environment bred unemployment, elevated school dropout rates, dilapidated housing, and unsavory residential environments (Siegel, 1998). Clifford R. Shaw and Henry McKay made social disorganization theory popular through their work at the Chicago School in the field of criminological research at the Chicago School (Siegel, 1998).

Shaw and McKay's research is notable in that their theory for explaining criminal behavior evolves from the idea that environmental factors within a community as opposed to an individual's biological characteristics, such as race, contribute to delinquency (Siegel, 1998). Additionally, Shaw and McKay explain how criminal gang activity for adults and youth is an expected reaction to adverse "social conditions in urban slum areas" (as cited in Siegel, 1998, p.169-171). Despite the sustained support for Shaw and McKay's explanation of social disorganization to explain the roots of crime and delinquency, there are several areas of weakness within social disorganization theory.

One weakness is the fact that people who live in socially disorganized environments do not all engage in crime and delinquency. Only a portion of any population engages in anti-social behavior. The reasons why a person decides to engage (or not engage) in criminal and delinquent activity can vary based on many factors, including a personal belief system, religion, education, personal influences, and selective decision-making. Furthermore, there may be reasons for a

person to commit a crime that do not involve the environment; these might include opportunity, mental capacity or IQ, personal needs, or peer pressure, among other factors. In contrast, however, it is not likely that these personal choices are a product of one's community or social influences.

Furthermore, in urban areas where police concentrate their efforts and arrest more citizens, the frequency of criminal activity may appear to be more prevalent than in suburban communities, which may not have concentrated policing efforts. Police statistics do not accurately reflect that the number of crimes being committed in suburban neighborhoods may equal those in urban neighborhoods. Nonetheless, social disorganization theory has paved the way for criminological theories that recognize that social structure has a bearing on the potential for a person to engage in criminal activity (Siegel, 1998).

One of the offshoots of social disorganization theory is social ecology theory, which holds that "conflicts and problems of urban social life and communities influence crime rates" (Siegel, 1998, p. 190). In addition, Shaw and McKay's concentric zone theory emphasizes community issues that influence crime in urban neighborhoods. Concentric zone theory also recognizes that there are programs that can mitigate crime such as those that focus on local issues correlated with crime such as education, family, and employment (Siegel, 1998). Generally, criminological theories that evolved from the Chicago School incorporate undertones of social disorganization theory in that they focus on environmental issues that influence crime. As communities develop and evolve, environmental elements also evolve to reflect those changes. While environmental issues are the basis of social disorganization and similar theories, ultimately the barriers or "strain" caused by those challenges can also be interpreted as a cause of criminal delinquency.

Social disorganization theories such as those advanced by Shaw and McKay (1969) help illustrate how "low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family disruption lead to community social disorganization, which in turn increase crime and delinquency rates" (Sampson & Groves, 1989, p.774). The solutions offered by Sampson and Groves (1969) to address the issues that create social disorganization, support community programs that attempt to strengthen community structure and organization.

The macro-level structural elements that contribute to reducing crime, such as the socio-economic status of citizens, availability of family enrichment programs, youth recreation programs, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility are all important for understanding the roots of crime and delinquency (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Fagan, 1987; Gabbidon & Greene, 2005; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Ohlin, 1983; Sampson & Wilson (1995); Shaw & McKay, 1969). Social disorganization theory suggests that support for strengthening communities is a key to crime prevention, and to the extent the Boys and Girls Club works with its youth constituents to give back to the community, it illustrates how these youths overcome social disorganization within the community (Boys and Girls Club, 2016). This research studies programs such as Passport to Manhood, which has this type of social support as one of its goals.

<div align="center">**Strain Theory and Anomie**</div>

Social disorganization theory is a macro structural theory because the premise behind the theory focuses on communities as a whole encompassing a broad perspective. On the other hand, strain theory and anomie address micro or individual concerns and issues relative to individual issues that affect people on a personal level including cultural and interactional relationships (Merton, 1968; Siegel, 1998).

Strain theory holds that "a lack of opportunity coupled with the desire for conventional success produces strain and frustration in young people" (Siegel, 1998p. 175). According to strain theory, the frustration of not being able to attain success by conventional means encourages deviance as a means of attaining wealth, with wealth defined by the cultural norms of the society (Merton, 1968; Siegel, 1998). Those who have the means to legitimately attain wealth and success, often create social norms, which in turn, causes frustration, or strain, for those who have fewer legitimate opportunities. These conditions may lead to criminal behavior by those with fewer opportunities (Merton, 1968).

Strain theory derives from Robert Merton's 1938 theory of anomie that states that cultural norms are ignored when the means of attaining cultural goals are hampered due to lack of institutional support (Merton, 1968). Moreover, deviance and delinquency occur when an individual adopts unorthodox methods in order to attain goals and wealth in his or her society in an effort to assimilate to the cultural norms (Merton, 1968). The structural challenges presented to a person create the internal conflicts or strains within an individual since he or she is not able to realistically attain the successes postured by his or her society (Merton, 1968). Societal barriers that prohibit success are an element within strain theory that contributes to the lack of opportunities (Merton, 1968). Some of these barriers include a lack of employment, a lack of transportation, poor educational opportunities, which are attributable to how society is structured (Merton, 1968). As a whole, Merton's theory of anomie describes how the environmental and societal challenges present in a person's environment cause a disjointed ambiance where unattainable goals are the societal standard while realistic means to attain those goals are lacking (Merton, 1968). This theory describes how existing barriers or challenges present in one's society affect an individual, causing struggles or strains, which may ultimately lead to criminal

means to attain the goals, set by his or her society. Understanding how the goals set by society cause strains on an individual is the underlying notion behind Merton's explanation of strain theory (Merton, 1968).

Strain theory explains the juxtaposition of a variety of elements that enable deviance (Agnew, 1992; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Strain theory helps to explain why deviance exists where social structures are inadequate. The major premise behind strain theory holds that where society creates standardized parameters for success, social structures are advantageous in supporting those that seek to be successful. Merton, the father of strain theory, explained that because social structures do not exist to help everyone equally, people can fall into five modes of adaptation: conformity, innovation, retreatism, ritualism, or rebellion (Merton, 1968).

Those who adapt through conformity comply with legitimate means to seek success in American society through education, employment, and continued hard work to gain wealth and success. Conversely, innovation uses illegal activities such as selling drugs, fraud, and theft to make money. Where conforming methods are not feasible or realistic due to societal barriers such as inability to attain viable employment that pays well, innovation is an alternative that can help youth cope (Merton, 1968). Ritualism consists of creating goals that are realistic to one's circumstances (Merton, 1968). While ritualists work to sustain their lifestyles, the aspiration to achieve any success outside of their realm is not a goal (Merton, 1968). Ritualists seek to sustain their status without any desire to move outside of their comfort zones. They are content with their status and do not seek to take risks outside of their realm (Merton, 1968).

Quite contrary to ritualists, those that seek rebellion attempt to defy their odds on a frequent basis. Rebellion is a form of adaptation to society that rejects conformity to social and structural rules while creating methods to cope as one goes along (Merton, 1968). The disregard

for structure and rules insulates those in rebellion from their society and cultures creating barriers that make rebels outliers. The body of literature on those that rebel against their society is relevant to this study because I examine how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. In examining their perceptions, it is important to learn about youth as individuals who are influenced (or not) in their decision-making in relation to delinquency. In explaining the tenets of strain theory, Merton (1968) recognized that while learning more about individual decision-making is important, one's environment, psychological influences, and external influences all play a collective role in ultimately swaying the pendulum towards or away from deviance.

To delve deeper into strain theory, I next discuss anomie theory, which examines the micro level or personal elements that cause strains within an individual. Anomie theory posits that the strains created by cultural norms exist because of the lack of realistic opportunities in a society's social structure (Merton, 1968). Hoffman and Ireland (2004) noted that strain theory's constructs were significantly broadened by Agnew (1992) "by conceptualizing strain to include not only the blockage of positively valued goals, but also to include the loss of positive stimuli and the presence of negative stimuli as precursors to delinquency and crime" (p.264). Given the lack of opportunities for success, toxic community environments, the absence of family support, and the temptations of partaking in unfavorable behavior to attain class status or tangible assets, strains are created that encourage deviance over compliance or socially acceptable behavior (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, Hoffman & Ireland, 2004). Agnew's (1992) micro level focus on strain theory is more socio-psychological since the focus looks to relationships and conflicts that exist in a person's life that can create strains such as parental divorce, single parent or guardian home environment, and bullying for example. The presence of negative influences,

or a lack of positive influences are more likely to create internal strains or conflicts that increase

one's propensity for delinquency (Agnew, 1992). The presence of these personal stressors in a

person's life may help to explain some of the reasons behind criminal behavior where a person

feels overwhelmed by the strains in their life, and then he or she elects to deviate into criminal

behavior because of the strains (Agnew, 1992).

Where strains are present in a person's life, the propensity to engage in criminal behavior

is an optional avenue to attain the goals set by society such as wealth and the attainment of high

value items and possessions, since criminal means such as stealing and selling drugs may be

quick ways to obtain money with little effort (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, Hoffman &

Ireland, 2004). Understanding how the lack of societal structures to encourage legitimate means

to attain goals is beneficial in understanding how societal failures contribute to strains (Merton,

1968). Similarly, an understanding of individual strains such as single parent homes, abuse, and

bullying sheds light on why strains may exist within an individual that may cause someone to

lean towards criminal behavior as a means to improve the negative circumstances present in their

lives (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, Hoffman & Ireland, 2004). The theoretical

analyses of strain and anomie theory which describe the personal difficulties that cause conflicts

that may enhance the likelihood of criminal behavior, have paved the way for differential

opportunity theory, which holds that the lack of legitimate opportunities for education,

employment, and success in a society causes people to engage in deviance and delinquency.

Differential Opportunity Theory

The fundamentals of differential opportunity theory dovetail with strain theory. Strain

theory holds that the strains or barriers that cause hardships on individuals create difficulty in

following norms (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1968). Furthermore, the

strains incurred to achieve success diminish opportunities to succeed, thus creating differential

opportunities (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) differential

opportunity theory recognizes how negative environmental influences coupled with personal

conflicts result in unfavorable circumstances that create opportunities for deviance. According to

this macro level theory, the motivating force behind deviant behavior is the desire to attain

wealth or a better status without being limited to legitimate means to attain these assets or

without assessing the consequences that may follow (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). The macro level

elements such as structural and institutional fundamentals are considered in analyzing

differential opportunity theory since societal influences are an integral part of this theory

(Cloward & Ohlin, 1960).

Wealth and class status define success in American society. The means to attain success

and a higher socioeconomic status are often scarce and inequitable across the board. As such, the

opportunities for success are limited to those who have the greatest access, or the means, to attain

wealth legitimately. The frustrations of being unable to advance in society create an

overwhelming feeling of hopelessness and distress, or strain (Agnew, 1992; Cloward & Ohlin,

1960). This theory informs my research because I expect to find that opportunities for

delinquency exist because of inequitable circumstances faced by at-risk and adjudicated youth

participating at the Boys and Girls Club. Moreover, while differential opportunity theory

describes one criminological theory, strain theory also describes why some youth yield to

delinquency.

Strain and differential opportunity theories are particularly relevant to adolescents, since

upbringing, opportunities and personal decisions have a major impact on the development of

young adults, and these factors will be present for the rest of their lives (Agnew, 1972; Hoffman

& Ireland, 2004). Knowing what issues may affect a youth in reference to her or his involvement in delinquency is relevant to this study because of the likelihood that youth served by the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg will become engaged in criminal behavior if he or she is not offered opportunities to mitigate potential risk factors associated with their lives.

Routine Activities Theory

Routine activities theory also provides a good foundation for understanding criminal behavior. Developed by Cohen and Felson in 1979, routine activities theory is a mid- range theory that focuses on the mindset of the offender, rather than the circumstances that inform the offender's decision-making (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Siegel, 1998). This theory holds that a person is more susceptible to committing a crime when there is lack of supervision, an attractive victim, and a motivated criminal willing to take advantage of an opportunity to commit a crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Siegel (1998) noted that a major premise of routine activities theory is that "crime and delinquency is a function of the presence of motivated offenders, the availability of suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians" (p. 124). When a potential offender decides that he or she will commit a crime, he or she must be motivated to act. Where motivation to act exists, the potential criminal is not likely to weigh his or her options on the consequences (Siegel, 1998). However, when a person's thought process can be influenced to make more conscious decisions that take into account both the decision-maker and the people they are affecting, the decision to refrain from committing a crime reflects knowledge of the benefits of obeying the law, thus reducing the motivation to carry out a delinquent act (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hoffman & Ireland, 2004; Siegel, 1998).

From the macro-level perspective, routine activities theory offers a theoretical analysis that "predict[s] how change in social and economic conditions influences the overall crime and victimization rates" (Siegel, 1998, p. 105). As such, routine activities theory helps to enlighten us about the influences that have a bearing on the offender's propensity to commit delinquent acts in a given environmental context. This context includes social relationships or the lack of those relationships, as in the lack of parental guidance and family bonds. Additionally, the socio-economic status of a potential offender (namely, poverty or a lack of financial resources) and the existence of opportunity to commit a crime, combine to influence criminal motivation. The macro-level social and economic perspectives are key to understanding and applying this theory.

As a whole, this theory helps inform my study to the extent that education is integral in many of the programs at the Boys and Girls Club to create positive, healthy thought processes and lifestyles. Decision-making, community, and leadership are foundational elements of the program model. Influencing the thought process of adolescents by alerting them to how their actions affect others, and sensitizing them as to how their actions may impact their own future, are basic educational strategies in many of the Boys and Girls Club programs. Thus, a clear understanding of criminological theories that shed light on how and why youth may engage in delinquency is essential for creating a framework to prevent delinquency.

Collectively, theories of social bonding, social disorganization, strain, differential opportunity, and routine activities combine to create a framework for understanding the elements that are often associated with the causes of delinquency. For youth living in an environment that provides limited access to positive stimuli, negative social influences, and a lack of awareness to make informed decisions, delinquency is a likely outcome (Hoffman & Ireland, 2004). For the

purpose of this study, these theories provide a firm knowledge base for understanding the risk

factors associated with delinquency. The use of theory to acknowledge causal factors and to

identify the resources needed to counter them can support efforts to mitigate delinquency. In

order to mitigate risk factors, one must first have a firm understanding of the reasons why

juveniles may engage in delinquency on institutional, cultural or interactional levels.

In summary, theories of the causes of juvenile delinquency connect to my broad research

question which asks: "Does the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg prevent delinquency?" I have

described how social disorganization, strain theory, differential opportunity and routine activities

theory create a framework for understanding why some youth are more susceptible to

delinquency. These concepts are important to this study because they each provided an element

that helps to better explain how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of

Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes, and these concepts provided

various rationales behind delinquency prevention programs. An understanding of these

theoretical concepts is an important basis for the analysis of effective delinquency prevention

programs. Having reviewed the criminological theories that explain why juveniles may engage in

delinquency on a macro and micro level, I now examine the factors that mitigate delinquency.

Factors That Mitigate Delinquency

Juvenile crime researchers and practitioners recognize that by mitigating risk factors the

probability of successfully reducing crime among adolescents is greatly improved (Jenson &

Howard, 1998; Shaw & McKay, 1969; Weatherburn & Lind, 2006; Worrall, 2004). A

comprehensive approach using multi-systemic, targeted efforts proves to be the most effective in

addressing delinquency and risky behavior (Nation et al., 2003). Programs addressing multiple

areas for personal advancement offer an all-inclusive approach to delinquency prevention,

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therefore ultimately reducing or eliminating risk factors that could lead to delinquency (Nation et al., 2003). Multi-systemic programs include mentorship, career development, leadership, decision-making courses, and drug prevention (Jenson & Howards, 1998).

Protective Approach to Mitigating Delinquency

As a whole, a protective approach to teaching youth about important life values is one way to diminish the risk for delinquency (Nation et al., 2003). The Boys and Girls Club programs seek to mitigate delinquency through prevention (Boys and Girls Club, 2016). This approach encompasses both the youth and their environment, offering multi-faceted services including skill building and training of youth, relationship-building, and increasing access to resources and opportunities, including improvements to transportation infrastructure to create easier access to local employers (Bogenschneider, 1996). A protective approach to mitigating delinquency does not simply address individual issues but is a comprehensive methodology for addressing risk factors that can potentially develop into future problems.

Teaching youth the importance of personal values along with the technical skills to understand how or why certain behaviors are, or are not acceptable, is one example of a protective approach to mitigating risk factors (Shader, 2004; Worrall, 2004). Demonstrating the context and purpose behind learning those skills is key to educating youth as to how and why their actions affect not only them, as individuals, but as members of their community and society as a whole (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988; Miao et al., 2011). A variety of characteristics such as personal values learned at home, self-esteem, and motivation contribute to personal growth and development (Nation et al., 2003) and must be nurtured outside the home.

For example, Miao et al. (2011) acknowledged the importance of teaching personal coping skills that young people can apply towards violence avoidance techniques (p. 125). Miao

et al. (2011) recognized that teaching basic personal values to young people furthers their capacity to deal with adversities in their daily function as human beings. "Moral behavior is a product not so much of the knowledge of moral rules, but of the degree of sophistication of one's larger moral world-view" (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988, p. 383).

Building personal development skills is a key foundational strategy that can be taught and learned using many resources and tools to illustrate these skills. Integrating personal development skills with character-building and mechanical skills where youth can apply themselves to real-world problems allows youth to better understand how all of these skills are relevant to them (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988). One dynamic approach such as volunteering within the community creates a genuine portrayal of reality for youth to help them understand how and when to apply themselves (Miao et al., 2011).

Overall, a multi-systemic model teaches youth the importance of personal values to build personal development skills that are applicable to that boy or girl for the purpose of preventing delinquency and improving his or her quality of life. These are all strategies that promote the mitigation of risk factors (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Miao et al., 2011). The literature recognizes that including community culture in the teaching model while also illustrating how a juvenile plays a role in his or her environmental structure is effective as a strategy for risk mitigation (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1988; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Miao et al., 2011; Shaw & McKay, 1969). Theorists also acknowledge that including an understanding of community culture and environmental structure in delinquency prevention programs helps to create a nexus to address social and cultural needs within the target community (Miao et al., 2011; Shaw &McKay, 1969).

Community Culture and Environmental Structure

Jenson and Howard (1998), Fagan (1987), and Shaw and McKay (1969) are among the many researchers who recognized that social and cultural inadequacies in a community contribute to juvenile delinquency. Wandersman and Florin (2003) recognized that including the local cultures within communities addresses the lack of some basic needs that lead to delinquency.

Understanding the needs of young people living in a specific community and sharing a culture can mitigate delinquency (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Wandersman & Florin, 2003). Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) explained that culture can be described as "(1) the content and distribution of shared values in a community and (2) whether those values are theorized as linked to social structure" (p. 379). The success of delinquency prevention programs depends on the involvement of community members who can define and implement the groups' priorities and directions and who understand how to align community needs with the tenets or goals of the juvenile justice programs.

Community inclusion in the implementation of juvenile delinquency prevention programs requires a delicate balance since the culture of a constituency group does not often coincide with the culture conveyed by the delinquency prevention program (Kubrin & Witzer, 2003). One example of this is the perception that criminal behavior is part of normal, daily life, as a means of survival, income, and everyday living (Kubrin & Witzer, 2003; Moriarty, 1992). In creating programs to help prevent delinquency, it is valuable to recognize that some of the participants are part of an environment where crime is acceptable (Moriarty, 1992). Kubrin and Witzer (2003) further acknowledged that for communities where crime is frequently present, citizens'

acceptance of crime is not due to depraved values, but rather to recognition of differential opportunities in American society (p. 379).

In this study, I examined how the leadership of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg assesses and includes an understanding of the local community culture in their programming. In the next section, I discuss the importance of studying the structures of delinquency prevention models and the elements of effective delinquency prevention models.

<p style="text-align:center">The Importance of Studying Delinquency Prevention Models</p>

In this section, I discuss the importance of studying prevention models, which include the history and theories used in a program model, and program deployment, along with evaluation and analysis. Community-based programs serving at-risk and delinquent youth have served as models for researchers, program developers, and social analysts as a means of understanding how to prevent juvenile delinquency. Researchers have benefited from the examples of existing models to create a solid foundation to understand and illustrate what has and has not worked in community-based programs serving at-risk youth (Nation et al., 2003). Thus, studying existing evidence-based programs with measureable outcomes for this population offers valuable insight (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

The areas for program review typically include a historical analysis, theoretical models, methods of program deployment, evaluation measures, analysis and development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2004). Beginning to study the history and theories used in a model program helps to explain how and why a program exists. Knowing the purpose for establishing a program may bring to light historical problems that have not been resolved, thus furthering the effort to create viable programs for delinquency prevention (Mennel, 1983).

Next, understanding the theories underlying a model program helps the researcher see how organizational leaders and staff interpret human behavior. While some theories are helpful for illustrating why people behave in a certain manner, model programs help us understand the context of behavior theories (Catalano et al., 2004). In this current study for example, I examined how differential opportunity theory explains why some youth commit crimes to create revenue. I also examined how the Boys and Girls Club applies tenets of the theory to create programs that teach youth to seek legitimate employment to obtain a source of income, as opposed to committing theft or other crimes to support themselves. Lastly, program deployment, evaluation and analysis are logistical areas that can teach researchers about the best times for program deployment (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003). The frequency of program deployment can vary based on geographical area, school schedules, and the number of youth served. For instance, an employment preparation program that targets older teens is scheduled during the period just prior to summer recess, based on the school calendar and the likelihood that those teens will be working over the summer recess. In planning annual programs for youth development, a logical first step in program development is considering previous program data since previous experiences can be used as a tool to review the successes and failures of programs. Reviewing previous programs has a bearing on participation and future development since past practices predict future behavior.

Analytic and evaluation tools are a means of measuring the success of past programs while simultaneously gathering data to prepare for future programs. The data collected from reviewing model programs is useful in many ways, depending on the specifics of the new program and the context in which the data is applied. Additionally, data from model programs

are a resource that can be adapted for incorporation into community-based programs tailored to the particular population served.

Understanding the development and implementation of a delinquency program, the importance of studying prevention models, the history and theories used in a model programs, underlying theories in a model program, and program deployment, along with evaluation and analysis offer benchmarks for effective delinquency prevention models. Having an understanding of effective programs creates a reliable resource to draw from for program modeling and design. Additionally, a study of existing models demonstrates how similar programs function successfully while establishing credibility when explaining how or why certain elements should be included in effective delinquency prevention programs.

Elements of Effective Delinquency Prevention Models

A comprehensive program that influences youth to refrain from delinquency is a model for effective delinquency prevention. The elements of an effective program include the constructs within the program that work towards prevention. Some of these constructs consist of needs assessments, local data analysis of crime and community needs, and the local culture (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011; Wright & Dixon, 1977). Program developers begin their analyses of communities with a needs assessment that includes surveys and/or data analysis of local constituency groups such as school officials, parents, and children. Data such as crime statistics, juvenile probation records, census data, and local government data including population figures and school data all contribute to initial calculations of community needs.

Data analysis is essential for evaluating the needs of a community to determine the allocation of resources. Identifying community needs is a preliminary step in helping an

organization address cultural attributes that may affect program development and or design (Sullivan & Latessa, 2011). As soon as needs are adequately identified and a plan is developed, a delinquency prevention program that addresses key elements germane to the local constituency, such as education, family, social development, and skill building can be deployed (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

An example of a program formed around assessed needs of a community is the RECLAIM program initiated in Ohio in 1993, which invested in community-based youth programs as an alternative to youth incarceration (Sullivan & Latessa, 2011). RECLAIM was a program designed to divert juvenile offenders from correctional institutions by placing juveniles in community-based programs (Latessa, Lovins, & Lux, (2014). Initially, the RECLAIM program required a risk analysis to determine whether the offender is high or low risk (Latessa et al., 2014). Low risk offenders were referred into the RECLAIM program where they were monitored in a community setting and assigned to community programs (Latessa et al., 2014). An analysis of effectiveness revealed that most of the youth participating in the RECLAIM program succeeded with the exception of high-risk youth (Latessa et al., 2014; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011). The analysis of the RECLAIM program is relevant to this study because evaluating the value of how community programs such as RECLAIM deter or prevent youth from engaging in delinquency is relevant to how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg also uses their programs to prevent youth from engaging in delinquency.

Wright and Dixon's (1977) historical analysis of program structures offers considerations for delinquency prevention programs, which include cost-benefit analyses of value, feasibility, sustainability, and community resources. Brandt (2008) acknowledged the importance of program structures such as those noted by Wright and Dixon by explaining the necessity for

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model delinquency prevention programs to improve the overall quality of society. Improving the quality of life of youth and preventing potential victims, would save communities money because it is more cost-effective to invest in delinquency prevention, rather than detention facilities (Brandt, 2008). Overall, even the most meagerly funded programs, such as primary prevention models, have the potential to prevent delinquency as long as they sustain the fundamental goals of youth development for delinquency prevention (Brandt, 2008; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011; Wright & Dixon, 1977).

Ideally, primary prevention programs interwoven into "organizational, institutional, social structural and cultural entities in a community" is the ideal method to implement prevention programs for youth (Brandt, 2008, p.74). Primary prevention programs incorporated into the public school curriculum, or into school and community activities that promote youth productivity, and positive public interactive activities within the community are examples of ideal incorporations of youth prevention programs into the community. Such programs include after-school programs, clubs, and activities that are open to all youths and incorporate cultural interests and needs. Primary prevention programs specifically address factors that prevent delinquency by focusing on local needs and by using program models that have been shown to be effective for this specific purpose. This type of delinquency prevention model is based on the criminological theory of social disorganization, which holds that when communities fail to incorporate measures that are designed to help youth succeed and refrain from delinquency, the opportunities to commit crime increase.

Conversely, early intervention programs concentrate on youth who are deemed to be "at risk," or more likely to engage in delinquent activity. The basis for this type of prevention approach consists of criminological theories such as differential opportunity, which holds that in

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order for youth to refrain from delinquent behavior, they must have better opportunities to succeed through positive influences within favorable environments. The Boys and Girls Club philosophically aligns with criminological theories and concepts held by theorists, sociologists, and interested community citizens who applied them to youth programs designed to prevent delinquency.

Juvenile crime prevention programs have evolved since the early 1970s, but they have remained intrinsically similar in format and general design (MacKenzie, 2000). The shared foci of many programs including those implemented at YMCA Clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and clubs sponsored by local community organizations include educational support, skill-building, family reinforcements and supports, and community building. All of these contribute to the overall goal of improving the quality of life of youth (Boys and Girls Club, 2016). The focus on bettering the life of youth contributes to a youth's likelihood of success, thus creating favorable opportunities as an alternative to delinquency (Boys and Girls Club, 2016).

To further develop models that work in a particular community, researchers note that using community-based program designs is important (Brant, 2008; Chung & Steinberg, 2006, Nation et al., 2003; Sullivan & Latessa, 2011; Wright & Dixon, 1977). Community-based program designs incorporate elements of effective delinquency prevention models while considering the local culture and ambiance. An essential ingredient in the design of such programs is soliciting community input on the social problems that contribute to delinquency (Jaffe & Baker, 2008).

Community-Based Program Design

The studies of Nation et al. (2003) and Jaffe and Baker (2008) offer scientific data describing common social problems shared by many communities where juvenile delinquency

occurs, as well as common characteristics of effective prevention programs. In their study of thirty-five delinquency prevention programs, Nation et al. (2003) offered an analysis of many of the key factors that must be incorporated in programs involving delinquent youth. Specifically, they found nine principles common to all of the programs. These include "comprehensiveness, varied teaching methods, theory-driven, opportunities for positive relationships, appropriately timed, socio-culturally relevant, included outcome evaluation, and involved well-trained staff" (Nation et al., 2003, p. 449).

Similarly, in their analysis of community solutions addressing rising juvenile delinquency rates in Canada, Jaffe and Baker (2008) argued for the inclusion of theory-driven, comprehensive programs that are socio-culturally relevant. Jaffee and Baker (2008) recognized that participation by parents, school educators, business partners, and the government are essential resources for successful programs.

In this section, I explained the importance of incorporating community elements into delinquency prevention models. Without a firm grasp on the local climate and needs, a delinquency prevention program can easily dissipate. Effective program models seldom compartmentalize individual issues but rather incorporate diverse and collaborative ways to engage with the community (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

A key characteristic present in effective collaborative community programs is the capacity to illustrate to youth the long-range impacts of both positive and negative behaviors (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1998). Arbuthnot and Gordon (1998) further indicated that when affected parties such as parents, schools, police, judges, and social workers all take part in youth activities, youth are less likely to commit crimes or recidivate.

In this study, I explored how the Boys and Girls Club employs community collaboration and how implementation tools help to further these collaborative efforts to help youth refrain from delinquency. Community-based programs that address the needs of at-risk and adjudicated youth and their families are ideally suited to addressing multiple needs. In the following section, I review the fundamentals of collaborative programs.

Fundamentals of Collaborative Programs

Collaborative programs are those that share resources and work together for the purpose of preventing delinquency (Worall, 2004). Collaborative programs save money and streamline resources, enable additional staff to participate in programs, have a broader selection of resources, and engage in positive relationship building in the community (Worall, 2004). The literature illuminates several elements of effective community collaboration in delinquency prevention programs. First, a component of a successful program includes an active participatory voice for local non-profit entities to promote cooperative juvenile delinquency prevention efforts (Jaffe & Baker, 2008; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Nation et al., 2003; Worrall, 2004). Second, cooperative programs create a space for programs to work together to determine the values, goals and, ultimately, collaborative plans for the program and permit each organization to share its overall vision (Worrall, 2004).

Then, by developing a clear platform where organizations can converse about the needs of their youth constituencies, they provide a basis for communication to recognize issues relevant to their local community. Clear communication also helps in the formulation of programs and allows them to evolve based on community needs rather than individual interests (Worrall, 2004). An ideal collaborative program is sustainable with a long-range plan that addresses

policy implications and enables policy changes that respond to community needs (Jenson & Howard, 1998).

Collaborative programs include a spectrum of community organizations including law enforcement, economic programs for low-income families such as welfare and poverty assistance programs, domestic violence and sexual assault programs, officials from probation, parole and educational institutions, and individuals from funding agencies (Jenson & Howard, 1998; Worrall, 2004). Finally, comprehensive collaborative community programs with a sustainable prevention focus include consideration of issues such as family counseling, tutoring, job training, and leadership training (Worrall, 2004).

In this study, I analyzed how the Boys and Girls Club works in collaboration with other organizations to prevent delinquency. When community members are involved and community needs are considered, resistance from the community is less likely. To clearly address the needs identified by the local constituency, programs should tailor programs to include community elements (Jaffe & Baker, 2008; Jenson & Howard, 1998, Worrall, 2004). Once community needs are addressed, the staff can re-direct its focus towards inclusion of local community culture and structural elements that benefit the constituency (Jaffe & Baker, 2008; Jenson & Howard, 1998, Worrall, 2004).

Leadership in Non-Profit Organizations Serving At-Risk Youth

One fundamental aspect of collaborative programming is strong organizational leadership by leaders of non-profit organizations. Leaders affect how organizations grow and develop partnerships that may benefit the organization. Leaders of non-profit organizations serving at-risk youth are expected to seek community resources that can help further the goals of their organizations. They are responsible for forming alliances, which save the organization money,

streamline resources, and foster information-sharing and joint program implementation.

Furthermore, leaders have a great deal of influence over staff members, and altruistic leaders often set the work ethic tone of their staff. In the non-profit setting, altruism is a characteristic shown by certain leaders and mentors who consider the satisfaction of "doing good" as a form of compensation for their work and dedication (Putnam, 2001). The drive to contribute to the community, serve those in need, and being a teacher or mentor are genuine motivators for many who work in the social service field (Tompkins, 2005).

Leadership styles of non-profit organizational leaders vary over a wide range, depending on many factors such as personality, education, and experience. Recognizing the leadership skills held by Boys and Girls Club staff, as organizational leaders, provides a valuable insight into the type of leadership style that staff members are likely to use (Northouse, 2013). Administrators can use this information to implement particular training styles for program development in non-profit organizations (Northouse, 2013).

In this study, I explored staff and former members' perceptions of leadership in the Boys and Girls Club to understand how the leaders of the Club create, develop, and sustain partnerships with community organizations that work with it. I also explore the leadership styles and habits of employees at the Boys and Girls Club.

Summary of Effective Delinquency Prevention Programs

In Harrisburg, resources and efforts have been invested in diversion programs for adjudicated youth on probation, rather than on programs for at-risk youth to prevent delinquency. While mitigating programs for juvenile probationers continue to be the primary option for youth in Harrisburg to better their lives, there is a clear need for the research I conducted because

research shows the benefits of delinquency prevention for at-risk youth by comparison with diversion strategies.

Drawing on previous research, I examined four aspects of Harrisburg's Boys and Girls Club delinquency prevention programs for at-risk and adjudicated youth. First, I looked at how the Boys and Girls Club addresses prime risk factors for delinquency and the influence Club programs have had on youth in terms of reducing their propensity for delinquency (Chung & Steinberg, 2006). Second, I examined how the Boys and Girls Club has established programs with measureable outcomes and whether or not program outcomes align with program goals (Nation et al, 2003).

Third, I examined how the Boys and Girls Club assesses local cultures (Chung & Steinberg, 2006). Finally, I explored the Boys and Girls Club's relationships with community partners and the extent to which the Club collaborates to create comprehensive programs with these partners (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

This study offers insights into the impact of the Boys and Girls Club on Harrisburg youth. While criminological theory is important in understanding how and why people turn to criminal behavior, research has shown the importance of preventing the conditions that promote criminal activity before a crime is committed. People, and youth in particular, must learn to opt out of criminal activity. This study analyzes how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club perceive the Club experience and program outcomes in relation to the goal of preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth.

Previous Research on the Boys and Girls Club

Numerous researchers, such as Anderson-Butcher et al., (2003); Quinn (1999), and Kreider and Raghupathy (2010), have conducted a national evaluation of Boys and Girls Club

programs. These studies have made great strides in researching the area of youth programs.

They offer insight into program development, the importance of sustaining or removing

programs, and creation of additional programs based on data analysis, participant feedback, and

criminological literature. These studies are similar to this study because many of them sought to

answer questions similar to my overall research question, which asks: In what ways do staff and

former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program

outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth? These studies

differ from this study in their data collection methods; some used quantitative data analysis or

secondary data as a research method, whereas this study uses qualitative data. Conversely,

qualitative studies focused on survey data from youth or staff, but not on the perceptions of staff

and former participants' experiences. Nonetheless, previous studies offer rich data to compare

and contrast my research and analyses. This study is unique because a qualitative analysis is the

primary method used to gather insight into perceptions of staff and former members.

Furthermore, this study focuses on particular programs that include Passport to Manhood,

SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate, whose goals are to address the

risk factors discussed in social disorganization, strain, and differential opportunity theory, and

routine activities theory thus offering a theoretical perspective of these programs.

Quinn (1999) described a study that was conducted across "30 regions of the United

States and involved more than 120 local organizations that worked with more than 30,000 young

people from 1989-1999, p. 104)." The purpose of the study was to explain the importance of

having the Boys and Girls Clubs in local neighborhoods to help mitigate circumstances that may

cause youth to participate in delinquent behavior (Quinn, 1999, p. 104). In evaluating the

effectiveness of five Boys and Girls Club programs, Quinn (1999) explained that youth who

lived in housing developments and who were involved in the Boys and Girls Clubs were also

"more involved in constructive education, and social and recreational activities" (p. 111). As a

whole, the existence of the Clubs correlated with a reduction in drug and alcohol use and related

activities among participating youth, as well as increased parental involvement.

Quinn (1999) also noted that youth who participated in both formal and/or informal

programs at the Boys and Girls Club were "less involved in dangerous, deviant and unhealthy

behavior" than youth in the same community who were not involved (p. 111). Similarly,

Anderson-Butcher et al. (2003), who studied Boys and Girls Clubs in Ohio, surveyed 139 out of

150 youth ages 10-18 to better understand how frequency of participation or lack thereof

contributes to positive outcomes for youth. The researchers suggested that participation in the

Boys and Girls Clubs increases interest in school and decreases risk factors associated with

deviant and risky behavior. As a whole, the study revealed that programs at the Boys and Girls

Club are effective as a collective method for improving the lives of youth in need of mentorship,

educational assistance, recreation, and character development as a whole.

A negative aspect of the study was that there were no significant measureable outcomes

from participation in the structured programs of the Boys and Girls Club that could explain a

reduction in deviant behavior (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003). As a whole, the researchers note

that while participation in the Club was beneficial to youth, there was no substantive or

significant data to support any relationship between reduction in delinquency and any specific

programs (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003).

A national compendium of the Boys and Girls Club from 1985 to 2004 summarized its

methods as follows: "The study included process evaluations, previous participants' surveys, and

outcomes evaluations. Process evaluations are described as program evaluations of the number

of youth served, elements that were recognized as critical for the program to succeed, program activities, participation, and member demographics" (Arbreton, Sheldon, Herrera, 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003, p.6). The results of the evaluation provided ideas for future program development and expansion, while offering staff information on what elements of the program were effective (Arbreton et al., 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003).

Boys and Girls Club program alumni participated in this study, which was designed as a "reflective analysis of the effects a Club had on an adult's life" (Arbreton, et. al, 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003, p.7). Alumni surveys were conducted in 1985, 1996, and 1999 using random digit dialing to gather information on the length of time a member participated in the Club, the impact of the Club on his or her life, and the frequency of participation in activities (Arbreton et al., 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003). The adult alumni overwhelmingly stated that the Club had a positive impact on their lives as a whole.

In 1985, 60 percent of former members indicated that relationships formed with the staff were important in their long-term success (Arbreton et al, 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003). In 1996, former members who reported being members for several years "scored higher in developmental experiences including: adult support, sense of belonging, sense of safety, opportunities for input and decision-making, leadership, engaging in interesting and challenging activities, and community service" (Arbreton, et. al, 2005, p.27; Hildreth & Smith, 2003). Respondents from a 1999 survey were particularly appreciative of structured programs such as career development, tutoring, and mentoring, all of which respondents attributed to their overall success (Arbreton et Al., 2005; Hildreth & Smith, 2003).

Finally, researchers used outcome evaluations in the Compendium to evaluate the effect that Boys and Girls Club programs had on youth in the neighborhoods and communities they

served, such as housing projects (Hildreth & Smith, 2003). For example, "housing projects that implemented the SMART Girls program reported 13 percent less juvenile crime, 22 percent less drug activity, and 25 percent less crack cocaine usage when compared to similar sites" (Hildreth & Smith, 2003, p. 7). The overall purpose of the outcome evaluations in the Compendium study was to determine whether the Boys and Girls Club programs had an effect on delinquent behavior, drug and alcohol use, and academic performance (Hildreth & Smith, 2003).

While the nationwide study shares many similarities with this study, the Boys and Girls Club solely collected the data, and the report was not a scholarly research project. The scientific validity of the study may be limited since the researchers did not undergo scrutiny by an institutional review board review, and its methods and findings were not peer reviewed. It is possible that bias may exist in the study because researchers were hired through the Boys and Girls Club and how exactly the surveys were administered, gathered, and processed was not specified. The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention monitored the majority of the data collection over the 19-year data collection period. Nonetheless, the Compendium offers a rich data model for my study since there are many similarities in the information I seek to gather for this study.

Another local outcome study conducted by Kreider and Raghupathy (2010) using a mixed methods approach examined a Boys and Girls Club pilot program. Kreider and Raghupathy (2010) found key factors for preventing delinquency including a focus on education, building family bonds, participation in Club activities, Club staff attachment and support, and a program tailored to community needs. I examined how the Club assesses and incorporates elements of the local community culture.

The 2014 National Youth Outcomes Report is a national study of the staff and student participants of Boys and Girls Clubs, which explains the strengths and weaknesses of their programs and the outcomes of Boys and Girls Club efforts nationwide. The goal of the study was to obtain information on the impact of the services provided while discovering ways to improve services rendered (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014). Respondents completed the surveys on an electronic intranet at local Boys and Girls Clubs connected to a national database. Each Club processed the data individually prior to conducting a national aggregation of the data (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014).

In this comprehensive study, 140,000 responded from 2,400 Club sites in 2014. This response rate was remarkable since the previous survey gathered in 2013 included only 80,000 responses. The survey instrument sought "to understand how staff practices relate to the Club experience" (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014 p.10). The information sought was correlations, or lack thereof, between perceptions of Club staff and of participants regarding outcomes in the programs (Boys and Girls Club, 2016).

The national study revealed that participants who attended the Club on a frequent basis (defined as two or more times per week) were more likely to graduate from high school and seek higher education than youth who did not participate in the Club; they volunteered more in the community and were less likely to engage in risky behavior (Boys and Girls Club, 2016) than those who did not participate in the Club.

There was a correlation between staff development and youth participation in the Boys and Girls Club programs. The staff who participated in frequent program training and program development reported higher attendance rates for their programs. Staff reported that the youth seemed to have a greater interest in the programs when youth were frequent participants (Boys

and Girls Club, 2016). Additionally, the survey demonstrated that development of personal relationships in smaller groups allowed for personalization of services for the participants (Boys and Girls Club, 2016). The employees were generally pleased with their successes and were committed to serving as many youth as they could effectively mentor (Boys and Girls Club, 2016).

While the national Boys and Girls Club study showed the Club making great strides as a whole in several areas, staff recognized a need for improvement or modification. A large number of staff believed that in order to prevent delinquency, the youth needed to participate frequently and consistently. Staff also thought that small groups are ideal for serving youth. In sum, staff wanted more frequent, consistent, and intimate interactions with youth.

An understanding of the general operation of delinquency prevention programs as well as the results of prior studies of Boys and Girls Clubs informs my analysis of the inner workings of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. This knowledge guides me in finding answers to my research question: Does the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg prevent delinquency? If so, how? Furthermore, by applying relevant theories relating to juvenile delinquency, I hope to contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject of delinquency prevention. I hope that this in-depth study of the Boys and Girls Club programs serves as a model for future improvements in juvenile delinquency prevention programs.

Overall, past evaluative studies of the Boys and Girls Club programs demonstrate that the Boys and Girls Club model is a comprehensive, safe resource with a variety of structured and unstructured programs for youth, which ultimately helps to reduce involvement in risky and deviant behavior, thus reducing the likelihood that youth will be involved in the criminal justice system (Anderson-Butcher, 2000; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003; Quinn, 1999).

These findings contributed to my study, which examined how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg serves at-risk and adjudicated youth in the Harrisburg community to prevent juvenile delinquency. The perspectives of the staff and former Club members was explored through the use of interviews and analyzed using qualitative methods with an appreciative inquiry approach for the purpose of better understanding if and how the Club serves youth to prevent delinquency.

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) described appreciative inquiry as "the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them" (p. 3). Appreciative inquiry seeks to understand the best in people, their environment, and functions. Generally, appreciative inquiry uses an intrinsic element to understand dynamic relationships and attributes. "Appreciative Inquiry is a form of action research that attempts to create new theories, ideas, images that aide in the developmental change of a system" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 117). The key data collection innovation of appreciative inquiry is the collection of people's stories of something at its best (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). For this study, the appreciative inquiry approach is accomplished by using the following methods to gather and analyze information: 1) asking qualitative research questions to understand the programs at the Boys and Girls Club through the words of staff and participants, rather than using survey data; 2) investigating how staff involvement relates to how the programs are presented to the youth; 3) investigating whether and to what extent staff plays a role in delinquency prevention; 4) learning more about the role of staff and how their perceptions of serving youth to prevent delinquency affect the youth participants in order to reveal substantive information about the contents, delivery, and needs for improvement of programs. Finally, I analyze resources for secondary data from the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg, including a 2008 Career Launch Program and the 2014 National Youth Outcomes Initiative Report, to

provide specific details on how the Club programs affect the local delinquency rates. I hope that this approach helps me to better understand the staff and former participants from the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of a study draws on theory, research, and experience to create a structure to guide the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This study incorporates social bonding theory, social disorganization theory, strain theory and anomie, differential opportunity theory, and routine activities theory as a framework for collecting and analyzing data from the Boys and Girls Club to examine how the staff and former members of the Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and/or reducing delinquency among participating youth.

The literature explains how and why juveniles who engage in delinquent behavior can benefit from community youth programs (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Quinn, 1999). According to the literature, factors such as education, adult guidance and mentorship, social structure, and positive role models all play essential roles in preventing juvenile delinquency (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Quinn, 1999; Shader, 2004). Youth who are not exposed to any of these positive factors have a higher tendency to become involved in delinquent behavior (Shader, 2004).

The operationalization table below lists all of the programs offered at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg and explains how particular juvenile delinquency theories shape the purpose and goals of each program. As Table 1 illustrates, the Boys and Girls Club has a number of programs. This case study examined four of these programs: Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. I chose these programs because their

goals are to address the risk factors discussed in social disorganization, strain, and differential opportunity theory, and routine activities theory. These theories describe the risk factors that typically create favorable environments for crime to occur. The Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate all take into account negative community environments highlighted in social disorganization theory, a lack of community structure and support as discussed in strain theory, and a lack of opportunity to succeed as highlighted in differential opportunity theory and routine activities theory.

Table 1 below briefly describes the Boys and Girls Club programs while noting the theory which relates to the program goals.

Table 1

Operationalization Table (Boys and Girls Club, 2016)

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION and PURPOSE	RELEVANT THEORIES
Fine Arts Exhibit Program	➢ Ages 6 to 18 ➢ Promotes artful expression through paintings, creation of sculptures and other art projects. ➢ Goal is to encourage projects to display at National Fine Arts Exhibit	Routine Activities Strain Social Bond
Triple Play	➢ Ages 6 to 18 ➢ Increases physical activity, healthy eating habits, healthy relationships and good nutrition." ➢ Goal is to teach Mind (thinking about choices for nutrition), Body (physical activity), and Soul (a sense of well-being) and knowledge.	Routine Activities Strain Social Bond
Passport to Manhood	➢ Boys ages 8-17 ➢ Promotes maturity, personal development, and the importance of giving back to the community. ➢ Goal is to reinforce character, positive behavior, and leadership towards "manhood" and positive behavior.	Routine Activities Strain Social Disorganization Differential Opportunity Social Bond

SMART Girls	➢ Girls ages 10-15 ➢ Teaches positive decision-making skills, sex education, and positive relationship building. ➢ Goal is to teach girls their full potential for healthy lifestyles and attitudes.	Routine Activities Social Bond/Control
Keystone Club	➢ Boys and Girls ages 14-18 ➢ Members elect officers and plan and implement activities in six areas: service to the Club and community, leadership development, education and career exploration, unity, free enterprise and social recreation. ➢ Goal is to attain "academic success, career preparation, and community service."	Routine Activities Strain Social Disorganization Differential Opportunity Social Bond/Control
Powerhour	➢ Boys and Girls ages 6-12 ➢ Tutors members to develop self-assurance and academic achievement. Behavior management and proper use of technology are also taught. ➢ Goal is to help members develop confidence and poise in completing their homework with technology resources.	Routine Activities Strain Differential Opportunity Social Bond
Club Tech	➢ Boys and Girls of all ages ➢ Teaches technology skills through hands on interactive software lessons. ➢ Goal is to teach youth proper use of technology for incorporation into professional development, education, and general skill building.	Differential Opportunity
Inspiring Teens to Graduate	➢ Boys and Girls ages 12-18 ➢ Provides career exploration, post-secondary education counseling, college application processes and tours. ➢ Goal is to prepare youth for college.	Routine Activities Strain Social Disorganization Differential Opportunity Social Bond/Control
Junior Staff Development	➢ Boys and Girls ages 11-18 ➢ Teaches community service and human services through apprenticeships and job training. ➢ Goal is to develop "a work ethic, interpersonal skills and a sense of community responsibility."	Routine Activities Strain Social Disorganization Differential Opportunity Social Bond

I chose these four programs because first, their goals align with risk factors that are often associated with causing delinquency. I also have a more manageable sample with four programs. Additionally, these programs seek to mitigate risk factors, which coincide with how delinquency theories suggest risk factors mitigation measures may prevent delinquency. Next, I describe each program in detail as the program goals relate to the tenets of the delinquency theories used to frame this study.

The Passport to Manhood program focuses on boys ages 8-17 "to teach and promote responsibility, reinforce positive behavior and develop character in adolescent males." Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). The boys are expected to log 14 sessions into their "passport." These consist of an introductory session, sessions on understanding manhood, self-esteem and identity, values in personal decision-making, academic success, healthy lifestyles, responses to authority, relationships with girls, fatherhood and the family, employment and careers, diversity, cooperation and conflict, personal leadership and community responsibility, and a graduation Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). These sessions include classroom and interactive community activities where adult staff members trained by the Boys and Girls Club provide instruction to the boys. Staff also guide the boys through community service projects and classroom activities using male role models to serve as real life resources that can offer advice, guidance, and support.

Social disorganization and routine theories posit that a lack of social structures creates favorable opportunities for crime. Since the community projects assigned in the program require the boys to take personal leadership and assume responsibility for their community as part of their assignments, the Passport to Manhood program seeks to target the risk factors that cause

social disorganization. These types of projects give boys an opportunity to take part in planning community activities, finding resources, and implementing plans to hold community events.

The program seeks to mitigate risk factors for delinquency by offering sessions on personal decision-making, employment and careers, cooperation and conflict, and personal leadership. Here, appropriate behavior, decision-making skills, and making proper use of available resources is taught to the boys so they can prepare for leadership roles. By teaching these skills, it is the goal of the Club to build the boys' confidence in order to create opportunities in which they can flourish, thus minimizing the differential opportunities that theorists have described.

The SMART girls program is similar to Passport to Manhood in that it is designed for girls ages 8 through 17, teaching them personal care, including healthy diet, exercise, physical health, self-esteem building, and personal relationship building. The overall goal of the program is to teach girls the skills needed to avoid drugs, alcohol, smoking, and early sexual activity. The program consists of 12 sessions which address gateway drugs, decision-making, advertising, self-image and self-improvement, coping with change, coping with stress, communication skills, social skills such as meeting and greeting people including "boy meets girl," assertiveness, relationships, and life planning skills. The program, held over a one-year period, incorporates current issues such as social media, family communication, date rape, and sexual harassment. Sessions incorporate relevant current events in appropriate ways. The SMART girls program speaks to the routine activities theory by teaching girls the skills they need in order to care for themselves without giving in to peer pressure.

Routine activities theory suggests that risk factors, such as a lack of social controls, exposure to delinquent behavior, and opportunity to commit crime, can be mitigated by favorable

surroundings. The SMART program seeks to mitigate these negative factors by addressing lifestyle changes and teaching self-sufficiency skills while incorporating relevant current events and addressing issues that may affect the daily lives of the girls. Smoking, for example, may be seen as a status symbol for maturity and being "cool." The SMART girls program teaches personal health and social skills which encourage healthy lifestyle habits and the development of social skills. Both of these are expected to reduce the risks posited in the routine activities theory by providing girls with the tools for making informed decisions for themselves as opposed to being influenced by peers.

The Keystone Club program teaches character and leadership development for "academic success, career preparation and community service" for both male and female youth ages 14-18. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Youth are given the opportunity to spearhead community events such as senior citizen assistance initiatives, neighborhood clean-ups, food banks, holiday events or fundraisers as a way of helping others in their community while developing leadership skills and creating a purpose for themselves within their community (Sweigart & Boyd, 2009). By allowing them to lead their initiatives, the youth are encouraged to learn about project management, human resources, inventory and finance, time management, cohesion, cooperation, and communication among many other skills (Sweigart & Boyd, 2009). These skills all directly contradict the negative factors identified by theories of social disorganization, differential opportunity, and routine activities.

Social disorganization, differential opportunity, and routine activities theories suggest that the experience of poverty, few employment options, a lack of positive influences, and everyday exposure to crime and delinquent activity are some of the factors that lead to

delinquency. The Keystone Club seeks to create favorable opportunities for success, leading

youth from otherwise unfavorable environments on a path to leadership and success. Youth who

otherwise lack experience, job opportunities, and a positive neighborhood ambiance are guided

to become pillars within their communities. The goal of the program is to have participants build

social bonds that are often lacking, according to social disorganization theorists, thus helping the

teens avoid criminal activity. By creating social ties and a sense of achievement, and developing

traits that can be useful in future careers, the Keystone Club seeks to dispel some of the stigma

that theorists have found to be detrimental to young people from this environment.

Inspiring Teens to Graduate is a program for boys and girls ages 12 through18 designed

to expose teens to an array of careers and secondary education options. Programs and Services.

(2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). The

purpose of the program is to motivate teens to explore various careers by giving them first-hand

experience through job shadowing, guest speakers, and hands-on projects. Programs and

Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).

In this program, teens are exposed to the college application process and the college campus

experience, along with meetings with college advisors to allow them to discuss their future

career plans. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL

(http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).Overall, the program goals are to inform teens

on how to plan for their future while connecting them with viable resources to further their

personal goals. Additionally, they are exposed to many opportunities that they may not have

otherwise.

The Inspiring Teens to Graduate program seeks to address many of the constraints cited

in theories of differential opportunity, routine activities, strain, and social disorganization, such

as weakened social structures, the presence of delinquent subcultures, and a general lack of positive influences (Rengifo, 2009). An underlying premise of all these theories is that the lack of opportunities attributable to detrimental environments in the neighborhoods where participants happen to live contributes to a bleak future for these teens. By allowing them to look beyond their neighborhoods, exposing them to positive possibilities and making social connections, this program seeks to create gateways for these youth. It seeks to create a solid framework for teens to look beyond what is lacking and to focus on future possibilities that can lead them toward their desired goals and dreams. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Thus, this program attempts to address a premise of social disorganization theory that asserts that lack of structure in one's environment promotes negativity.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. The literature review for this study includes examples of model community-based programs serving at-risk and delinquent youth. These examples assisted me in studying the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg by comparing and contrasting the Clubs with these model programs. The primary elements used in designing successful community-based programs form a structured frame of reference, which I used to understand the operations of the Harrisburg Club (Jaffe & Baker, 1998, Jenson & Howard, 1998; Nation et al., 2003; Worrall, 2004). Knowing the elements that are key to the operation of thriving programs helps me analyze its strong points and weaknesses.

An analysis of community collaboration and implementation tools, along with a review of the fundamentals of collaborative programs, also provides a necessary perspective for this

study (Jaffe & Baker, 1998; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Nation et al., 2003; Worrall, 2004).

Additionally, an understanding of the epistemology of community culture and structure, as well

as the risk factors that are involved in delinquency, are important factors in analyzing the success

of social programs. Cultural competence is required for juvenile delinquency prevention (Jaffe

& Baker, 1998; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Nation, et al., 2003; Worrall, 2004). According to

Miao et al. (2011) and Nation et al. (2003), knowledge of community values, mores, and customs

are a critical component of successful programs serving the at-risk juvenile constituency, as is

cultural awareness of the social order within the community (Jaffe & Baker, 1998; Jenson &

Howard, 1998; Nation et al., 2003; Worrall, 2004).

I used social disorganization theory to emphasize several elements that affect

delinquency, such as poverty, domestic issues, and education (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Fagan,

1987; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Ohlin, 1983). Social disorganization theory explains how

sociological issues such as the socio-economic status of residents, employment, poverty,

education, and wealth within a community contribute to the demise of community when

structural support systems are lacking (Shaw and McKay, 1969). Additionally, the discussion of

differential opportunity and strain theory sheds light on the criminological theories that explain

some of the causes of delinquency and the propensity for deviance.

Finally, using a micro-level approach, measurements of program effectiveness are

important to ensure that the arduous efforts made by all interested parties are in fact adequately

addressing the identified variables, as well as the organizational mission (Chung & Steinberg,

2006). Quality assessment tools ensure that the relevant needs are met. These tools enable

program managers to make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes in programs such as the

delinquency prevention at the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club, which is the subject of this study (Chung & Steinberg, 2006; Fagan, 1987; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Ohlin, 1983).

This comprehensive literature review assists in answering my research questions: Does the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg prevent delinquency? What techniques and strategies do staff consider to be most successful in preventing delinquent behavior, and why? What is the impact of these techniques on the lives of participants?

This study is unique from previous similar studies in many ways. First, this study offered a comprehensive analysis of an evidence-based program that promotes delinquency prevention for young persons without a criminal record, unlike the many existing programs that offer mitigation to prevent recidivism. Second, the focus on prevention offered a scientific model for a protective approach to delinquency prevention, addressing potential risk factors and issues that may lead a youth towards a path in delinquency. Lastly, I used a qualitative methodology to explore staff member perspectives as well as to gain insights from former members from direct accounts of their experiences. I hope to use this study as a model for future program development.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceived the Club experience and program outcomes. I conducted an in-depth case study of the organization, consisting of interviews with former participants and Club staff. I supplemented this with a content analysis of internal Club documents to provide additional data to answer the research question: In what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth?

Study Design and Rationale

This study employed a qualitative case study research model. A qualitative case study involves an in-depth evaluation of a program, process, or activity (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the qualitative approach employs an inductive interpretation of the data, resulting in a genuine understanding of the perspectives of employees and former participants of Boys and Girls Club programs (Creswell, 2014).

Data collection methods included interviews with staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club, along with a review of Boys and Girls Club records. Interviews with staff and former members involved one-on-one inquiries to gather their perspectives, in their own words (Patton, 2002). Interviews offered participants an opportunity to be candid and descriptive in their responses to questions (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). Reviewing club data was useful to understand the mission and operations of the organization and, to some extent, how well the organization is realizing its mission.

Understanding the viewpoints of staff members by allowing them to explain how they served at-risk and adjudicated youth, along with analyzing the perspectives of former Boys and Girls Club members, were key elements of this study. I used an appreciative inquiry approach, which included a "cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them, this approach involves systematic discovery of what gives life to an organization or a community when it is most effective" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8). In learning about the Boys and Girls Club organization, its processes and how the Club functions, an appreciative inquiry approach guided my research.

This study also included an analysis of secondary data consisting of internal statistics and records of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Harrisburg such as a 2008 Career Launch Program and the 2014 National Youth Outcomes Initiative Report. Secondary data is existing data collected by another organization or researcher and often includes archival statistics, demographic information, and numeric information documented by the researcher or the organization itself (Creswell, 2014; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). The secondary data for this study included demographic information on current and/or previous juvenile participants, program completion rates, and graduation and arrest rates drawn from a Boys and Girls Club database. These data offered information that allowed me to familiarize myself with the program and organization. I also used the data to analyze how the Boys and Girls Club measured program effectiveness and to examine whether these data are used for program development.

The use of secondary data for this study, from the 2008 Career Launch Program and the 2014 National Youth Outcomes Initiative Report, were valuable because the data were easily accessible and informed me as the researcher of the historical context for the programs and the organizational background, which reinforces credibility while substantiating validity (Creswell,

2014; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). However, some disadvantages of using secondary data included: inaccurate records, improperly collected data, or missing information (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009).

As I learned more about the organization, I chose to focus on four programs, which included Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls program, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. These programs seek to improve the quality of life of youth by teaching skills that directly combat risk factors for delinquency including family, poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure, and support and exposure to violence. My hope is that the findings from this study will inform program development juvenile delinquency prevention in the organization and greater Harrisburg area, creating new opportunities for communities in Harrisburg to collaborate to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Recruitment and Sample

Prior to beginning my interviews, I communicated with the Executive Director via phone and email. I also visited the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg and spoke with the Program Director to obtain a letter of approval for the study. I explained my intentions to interview staff members, review secondary data, and the requirements for an IRB approval for this study. Through several phone conversations as well as in-person meetings, I explained the details of my study and my intent. I also provided electronic copies of my interview questions, my IRB approval, and recruitment flyers, both in electronic form and on paper for approval. The Executive Director provided several private location options to conduct my interviews in two locations. I also submitted verification of my child abuse clearances for Pennsylvania along with a criminal history check. This is a requirement for the Club for all staff and volunteers.

To recruit participants for the study, I asked the program director to send group emails to the paid staff as well as to all adult former members (see Appendix A). I also placed a flyer (see Appendix B) on the Club bulletin boards and in common areas and I asked interested participants to contact me directly. Once they contacted me, I explained the purpose of the study. I also explained confidentiality and security of the research data to protect all participants from having their responses revealed and prevent issues that may arise from their employer. Then, I explained the interview process, noting that the interview would take about an hour and responses would be recorded. Upon agreement of the participant, I scheduled a meeting at the Boys and Girls Club with the participant. Before conducting the interview, I obtained informed consent.

I recruited only former adult participants (over the age of 18) and current or former staff from four Boys and Girls Club programs: Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. As adults, former participants can speak of any influences (or lack thereof) by the programs on their own lives. I chose to interview previous participants from the four selected programs to see if these specific programs had a role in preventing delinquency. I wanted to study former participants because a current participant would not be able to offer a comprehensive explanation of delinquency deterrents, whereas an alumnus or previous participant offered insights that have been gained after completion or termination of the program. I recruited 18 former participants and current staff from the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg as subjects for the study.

Many of the former participants were also current staff who currently or previously worked in any of the four chosen programs. These former participants/staff members had unique insight into the structure and inner workings of the programs. For example, paid staff members participated in formal program implementation. Paid staff also had consistent, long-term

involvement in the programs. The staff participants I interviewed were program managers, instructors, and support staff. All have worked, or are currently working with youth in the four selected programs. Staff can offer insight into their viewpoint on how and/or why programs influence youth.

I interviewed eighteen staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club for this study. Eight respondents were former participants who were currently on the staff, six were former participants with no current affiliation with the Club, and four were staff participants with no prior affiliation to the Club. Six of the staff participants worked directly with the programs at the Club such as Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. Twelve interviewees were male, and six were female with ages ranging between 18 and 62; seventeen participants were African American, and one was of Hispanic descent. Of the twelve staff participants, three were assigned to the John N. Hall Clubhouse exclusively, while nine worked primarily in the Angino Clubhouse, on the south side in the city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The staff participants often work interchangeably between the John N. Hall Clubhouse and the Angino Clubhouse depending on the needs of the programs. I interviewed staff at the location where it was most convenient for them. The Clubhouses are located about three miles away from each other. There is no significant difference in terms of the populations served and the programs offered since staff work interchangeably between locations. I chose Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate because the goals of these programs directly align with the tenets of sociological delinquency theories. For example, Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate have specific program components which take into account negative community environments as

highlighted in social disorganization theory; a lack of community structure and support, as discussed in strain theory; and a lack of opportunity to succeed as highlighted in differential opportunity theory. I also recognized the need to limit the number of potential participants to a manageable size.

Data Collection

Participants

This study used a social constructivist perspective, which relied "as much as possible on the participants' views of the [Boys and Girls Club]" (Creswell, 2014, p.8). A social constructivist approach recognizes that human beings each have a unique interpretation of their experiences, based on how they process interactions with others and with their environment (Creswell, 2014). Since subjective meanings develop out of personal experiences, environment, culture, and historical elements, these all play a role in how a person forms their interpretation of the world (Creswell, 2014). The social constructivist viewpoint focuses on "interpreting the meanings people have of the world" (Creswell, 2014, p.8). For this study, I expected to elicit genuine insights from the staff and from former members, promoting clarity and an accurate depiction of their views on how the Boys and Girls Club prevents delinquency (Creswell, 2014).

I conducted interviews to familiarize myself with how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive their experiences in the program and whether the outcome of their participation may have included prevention and/or reduction of delinquent behavior. The viewpoints of the former participants and full time paid staff members offered valuable insights. They offered a deeper understanding of the program from their own unique perspectives (Patton, 2002).

Once a participant agreed to take part in the study, they signed an informed consent form, and I offered them a paper and/or electronic copy of the form. I also provided information on personal resources for counseling, victim witness programs, and other organizations in the event that they needed counseling services or similar assistance (See Appendix F) as a result of anything that might have emerged from our interviews. I advised all of the participants that I would be recording our interviews on a digital recorder, which I displayed and placed in a visible location. I explained that I would keep the interviews in my possession until all the interviews were transcribed, and they would be locked in a secure location at my home to ensure confidentiality and would only be used for data analysis. I also explained that I would have the interviews transcribed by a professional who would hold the interviews in a secure location during transcription. All the participants agreed to the terms of the study. Lastly, I offered all the participants a copy of my final dissertation if they were interested in the final project.

As stated above, the eighteen participants interviewed were over 18 years of age. I recorded all interviews and had them professionally transcribed. I met with the interviewees in several spaces at the Angino Clubhouse including the conference room, the art classroom, the lobby office, the woodshop, and the business office depending on the time of day, availability of the rooms, and the participant. I interviewed three participants at the John N. Hall location in a multi-purpose office/conference room area. I conducted two interviews in the administrative offices of the Susquehanna Township High School in Harrisburg, the place of employment for those former Club participants. The interviewees had responded to my call for volunteers and agreed to meet me during their lunch breaks. Four of the interviews lasted between 25 and 35 minutes while the remainder lasted an hour to an hour and a half. All of the participants completed the entire planned interview.

From former participants, I gathered opinions on the effectiveness of the programs based on their lived experiences (see Appendix D). I used informal, semi-structured interviews with these former members trying to capture how their experiences may or may not have affected their life path, and how they arrived at decisions to either participate, or not participate, in delinquent or criminal behavior (Patton, 2002). Their personal experiences provided insight into the impact of the programs.

I conducted interviews with staff members during the staff member's work day in a private office designated for these interviews. I also used a semi-structured approach (see Appendix D) to gain insight into the effectiveness of the actual operation of these programs (Patton, 2002; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009).

I used semi-structured interviews with clear and thorough questions for both former members and employees. I used two question guides, one for employees (see Appendix D) and one for former participants (see Appendix E) as a resource for guiding the interviews (Patton, 2002). The question guide for employees contains questions regarding employees' opinion of why youth engage in delinquency, whether staff believes that the Boys and Girls Club programs impact delinquency, whether they meet the needs of youth at the Club, along with additional questions addressing Club programs and delinquency. Similarly, the question guide for former members includes questions regarding a former member's opinions on the purpose of the Club programs, whether the programs influenced their decision to engage or not engage in delinquency, what the most influential element of the programs was and why, along with additional questions regarding the value or worth (or lack thereof of) regarding Club programs. I asked each participant and employee the same questions from their respective question guides,

which allowed for comparisons of responses and identification of themes or similar responses during coding and analysis (Patton, 2002).

Interviews

I began all the interviews by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of the study. I explained that their participation was voluntary and that their decision whether or not to participate had no influence on their relationship or employment with the Boys and Girls Club. I also explained their confidentiality rights as participants, their option to decline to answer questions, as well as their right to terminate participation at any time. Additionally, I explained that any information they shared would remain confidential, and I would assign each individual a pseudo name, which I assigned on my notes as Participant #1, #2, #3, and so forth I ensured security of the recorded interviews by keeping the recorder with the interviews in a locked safe at my personal residence.

In addition to recording each interview on a Sony digital recorder, I also recorded field notes during each interview to supplement the interviews. I then forwarded the recorded interviews to a professional transcriber and each interview was transcribed verbatim into Word format. I then read each transcription along with the corresponding field notes.

Member checking is a form of solidifying trustworthiness for the data gathered in a study. I offered summaries of transcribed interviews to participants of the study for their input to ensure the researcher properly interpreted the interviews. For this study, I offered a member check to ten participants, and six offered feedback. The feedback provided by the participants agreed with the summaries offered by the researcher. The purpose of member checking was to ensure that my own biases as a researcher did not influence "how participants' perspectives are portrayed, and to determine the accuracy of the findings" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p.113). I

also promised an executive summary to the organization staff upon completion and approval of my dissertation.

Secondary Data

Using the internal data system of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg, and the 2014 National Youth Outcomes Initiative Report, I reviewed demographic information and records of the four selected programs: Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls program, Keystone Club, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. I also reviewed the 2008 Career Launch Program, a formal report that contained data from the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club. These data pertain to the Club members and include program measurement guidelines explaining measurement tools for evaluating program effectiveness and completion rates for the Boys and Girls Club programs, along with graduation rates and any reported criminal arrests.

I also reviewed quarterly assessment reports and internal statistical data collected by the Boys and Girls Club relating to program effectiveness, program design, and the methods used to measure the progress of programs, previous statistical data, and other data related to the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The program manager for the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg granted access to local and national Boys and Girls Club data upon approval of my background application.

The purpose of the data review was to explore whether former participants have benefited from the programs of the Boys and Girls Club. Some statistics that would indicate that participants have benefited from the programs include educational achievement (high school graduation, college or trade school, and/or higher education). Other statistical data such as participant arrests offered insight as to whether participants in certain programs refrained from criminal activity. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL

(http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). While I used these data as evaluative tools, the fact that the youth who participated in some of these programs did not participate in criminal behavior cannot be solely credited to their participation in the Boys and Girls Club. As a qualitative study, it was not my aim to strive for a representative sample, but to gain insights regarding how Boys and Girls Clubs might help to reduce delinquency and hopefully inform future studies of more representative samples.

Analyzing the secondary data offered an insight into Club members opinions of the Club programs while they were participating in the Boys and Girls Club programs and activities. These resources of data offered a glimpse of Club members' perceptions of Club activities as they experienced them in Boys and Girls Clubs nationwide including the Harrisburg Club. While my qualitative analysis offered thick, rich descriptions of individual experiences of former members and staff at the Harrisburg Clubs, the secondary data results paralleled my qualitative data results. These data helped to inform my interpretations of the interviews by offering an existing resource of staff and participant opinions on the Boys and Girls Club, thus supporting the findings for this study. In analyzing the secondary data, I reviewed the researchers' explanations of their findings to learn more about the Club dynamic from an organizational perspective.

Understanding how the Boys and Girls Club functions as an organization using the secondary data helped me to better understand the data I gathered through my observations and interactions with staff and former members of the Club. The secondary data described how attitudes, interactions, and leadership at the Club shaped the environment for youth at the Club to a positive ambiance where youth success is the primary organizational goal. Reviewing the data from the secondary data descriptions and findings provided a comparative model for my research

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because I was able to review data such as the National Youth Outcomes Survey, which measured how well the Boys and Girls Club deliver effective programming, what programs are most effective at deterring and/or preventing risk factors, delinquency rates, and opinions on staff influences.

Similarly, the Career Launch program data offered insight into whether efforts to develop youths' skills for career preparation are effective. My review of internal statistical data for the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club was also helpful in framing a local perspective of the Club's work. Reviewing high school graduation rates for Club members is an example of how the Club uses their own data to adjust educational programs. The Executive Director of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club explained that high school graduation rates are used to develop communications with school officials for program adjustments or improvements with the ultimate goal of helping youth succeed scholastically. An annual report completed by staff to assess their participating youth was also a good resource to review as a secondary data source because these staff assessments of youth illustrated how staff were involved in the development of each participant as an individual. The individual assessment was used as a tool to pair youth with mentors based on their personalities, guide them through programming based on their social and emotional needs, and redirect youth to social services. My review of these data was valuable for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of data pertaining to staff such as personal experience, and professionalism, which collectively helped me to clarify how the Club intersects interactional, cultural, and institutional efforts in a streamlined manner to help youth succeed.

These secondary data resources were useful tools in helping guide my analysis of the data for this dissertation by creating an informational platform where I could better understand the framework of the Boys and Girls Club as an organization at an institutional level of analysis. As

a whole, reviewing the secondary data from the Boys and Girls Club was beneficial to my study

because these statistical data offered insight into whether youth completed programs. Lastly,

secondary data offered a longitudinal picture of program completion by previous members, arrest

rates, and general insight into program data.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Once the interviews were completed, I had the recorded interviews transcribed by a

professional transcriber. To organize and code the data, I used NVivo 11, a data analysis

software program that assists with organizing qualitative data. Processing the transcribed

interviews through the software program allowed me to identify themes, common trends, and

patterns from the interview responses and to code the themes using an open coding method.

I protected the data by using a password-protected computer and file on my personal computer.

Coding

I conducted a qualitative research analysis that began with initial open coding. This

iterative process was continuous throughout my data analysis. My objective was to identify

factors relevant to the research question as reflected in the interviews. I reviewed each interview

individually in the analysis. I identified common themes across the data with regard to

addressing the research question. The process of data analysis involves "making sense out of

text and data…and preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper

and deeper into understanding the date, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the

larger meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). I looked for patterns, themes, and

dimensions in the data through analysis of the interviews, coding of the data, and further analysis

as themes and patterns emerged. My goal as a researcher was to describe the participants'

subjective experiences and views.

The first level of identification occurred during the initial review of each interview transcript line by line. Upon receiving the transcribed transcripts, I analyzed the data for each interview, and then conducted open coding utilizing NVivo software, which is an analytic tool to facilitate the coding process. I used an *open coding* method, which utilizes a brainstorming technique described by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to "open up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them" (p. 160). Using open coding, I thoroughly reviewed the data contained within the data set before beginning to group and label concepts. I began the process of coding by taking the raw data and pulling out concepts and then further developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions and grouping them into themes. My data analysis process included the following steps:

1. Reviews of all interview transcripts notes

2. Created a hand-written table with columns for each theme

3. Imported the data into NVIVO

4. Coded the data in NVIVO using open coding

5. Defined the properties of the dominant themes

6. Created categories that represent major and minor themes

In my review of the data, I worked inductively, reviewing each transcript line by line to make connections between groups of similar words, phrases, or groups of related summaries with similar phrases. Initially, I used each research question as a guide to begin creating an outline for my initial codes. As I reviewed each individual transcript, I began coding the data into patterns and themes as similar terms, phrases, and concepts mentioned by the participants through their descriptions of their experiences with the Boys and Girls Club. The coding process identified 15 themes. An illustration of my initial codes is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2

Coding Themes

Initial Codes					
(EOPS- Engaging Opportunity) Offering youth engaging opportunities	(SCOMIT - Staff Commitment) Staff commitment to youth	(ACDM SUPRT - Academic Support) Providing academic support	(COMM SERV - Community Service) Requiring youth to serve the community	(RISK FCTRS - Risk Factors) Educating kids about risk factors	(SRVEAL L - Serving ALL Youth) Serving all youth irrespective of risk or criminal history
(CHARPRO GMS - Character Programs) Offering programs to develop character	(INSPR LFE GLS - Inspire Life Goals) Providing inspiration for life goals	(COLGE PREP - College Prep) Preparing youth for college	(POLICE BLDG - Police Relations) Building relationships with law enforcement	(SOCSUPRT - Social Support) Providing social support for youth	
(STIM PRGMS) - Stimulating Programs) Offering stimulating programming	(MRL DEVLP - Moral Development) Facilitating moral development among youth	(SKILL TRD - Skills and Trades) Teaching youth skills or a trade useful for employment		(SAFETY CMFRT - Safety and Comfort) Providing a safe comfortable environment for juveniles	

Secondary Codes				
Effective program approaches to prevent delinquency -Offering youth engaging opportunities Including *character development	Staff commitment is essential for adequate mentoring of youth -being a resource for youth -providing a safe	Providing inspiration for life goals		Specific educational/learning components such as character development, academic support, and educational encouragement, all contribute to a youth's positive enrichment.

* academic   environment
support and a
supportive
mentor

The process of coding data consists of making an in-depth review of the transcribed

interviews to recognize emerging themes, and then grouping similar themes together as they

materialize (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The coding process is used "to generate a description of

the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis" (Creswell, 2014, p.199).

Creswell explains that coding themes should be created using the terms used by the participants.

After identifying the themes, I was able to further develop my theoretical analysis by

forming connections between the research, theory, and the literature. Since my theoretical

analysis was used to better understand a "perspective on behavior," I conducted a scientific

analysis to discover the relationships between the interviews, applicable theory, and my literature

review (Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p. 3). To facilitate my scientific analysis, I coded the data using

grounded theory methods to organize and analyze the data in the interviews.

Coding in grounded theory offers a tool to interpret data for theoretical assimilation

(Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Holton, 2007). There are two types of theoretical coding in grounded

theory: substantive and theoretical coding (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Holton, 2007). Substantive

coding is more pronounced in terms of how data is organized. Compartmentalization of

substantive data is based on trends, relationship associations, and generalizing of emerging

themes. Substantive coding is useful for recognizing similarities and concepts that help shape

the conceptualizations for recognizing theoretical relationships within the data set (Glaser, 1978).

The electronic software program I used in this study, NVivo, is an example of a tool that helped

me facilitate substantive coding. NVivo was a valuable asset for organizing, filtering, and

sorting data into comprehensive categories. Theoretical coding helps to inform the research by recognizing how the data can be woven into theories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser, 1978; Holton, 2010). Theory in sociological research is used for many scientific purposes. For this study, I used theoretical analyses to better understand a "perspective on behavior" (Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p. 3). Hence, the use of grounded theory for my data analysis allowed for a scientific processing of the data, strengthening my research so that it adds to the body of knowledge for criminological research (Glaser & Strauss, 2009).

In coding the data from the interviews, I analyzed the transcribed data and organized emerging themes and trends using a substantive coding approach (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As major categories emerged, I used a theoretical coding to identify theories and concepts as they developed. Then, I used the major categories that emerged to compare and contrast the relevant theories in this study to the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The theories discussed above informed my analysis by providing a framework for the data gathered from the participants of the study.

For example, where a former participant explained that she failed to benefit from the SMART Girls program due to a lack of job referrals and inadequate job training, as well as a lack of transportation to a possible job, that response was coded into an unsuccessful category in terms of not meeting the SMART Girls program goals, corresponding to the arguments proposed by differential opportunity theory. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) suggested that in analyzing qualitative data, "identifying and noting common patterns in the data, creating codes that describe data patterns, and assigning those patterns into the conceptual framework is all part of data analysis" (p. 142). In analyzing the data, I kept detailed records to identify similar patterns, responses, ideas, or problems (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I engaged in initial coding to capture

the meanings in participants' responses, grouped those codes into categories, and then I examined those for themes and patterns that related to the conceptual framework of the study, including the guiding theories.

In analyzing how the participant responses answered the research questions, I pursued configurations and groupings that offered insight into the overall research question; in what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth? While reviewing each interview, I read each transcript line-by-line looking to capture interrelated meanings. I then moved to search for themes and patterns, which I then analyzed to see how those connected to the theories and research questions. For example, through each interview I wanted to discover participants' perceptions of success of the programs, mentorships, character development, academic support, education, career, and community service. As I read the interviews, I listed each theme and marked it with a hash mark each time a specific theme reoccurred in subsequent interviews. As I marked each category, I also noted the participant identification number and the number of times each participant mentioned each theme.

To thoroughly check my data through a review of my notes, I crosschecked my thematic chart against my field notes for each participant. Before grouping the data into categories, I conducted a thorough review of all the raw data through open coding as described by Corbin and Strauss (2008) who defined coding as "a thorough analysis of the data to consider all the prospects contained within the data set, and the process of grouping data into relevant categories or into groups where similar characteristics are recognized as they emerge from the data" (p. 62).

In using open coding, I reviewed the raw data and began by using labels to group similar ideas as they appeared. Next, I distilled the raw data into categories creating more refined

categories and organizing categories by concepts. I also reviewed the field notes that I had taken

during each interview to ensure that I included my observations for each participant. The purpose

of this analysis was to identify emergent themes in the data and identify concepts and themes that

were based on the research questions as they emerged (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

 These categories were broadened, narrowed, and modified as patterns emerged. To

categorize patterns, I used the parameters defined by Lofland and Lofland (1995) who suggested

that discovering patterns should consist of identifying: (a) frequencies, (b) magnitude, (c)

structure, (d) processes, (e) causes, and (f) consequences. The six parameters defined by Lofland

and Lofland (1995) were useful tools for organizing and coding the data collected from

participants. I discuss a more detailed analysis of the data in the following section.

First, I used the word count feature in the NVivo software to identify frequencies. I also

compared my hand-written chart and the notes on my line-by-line transcript analysis to count the

frequency of words such as "mentoring," "education support," and "delinquency prevention." I

created large categories to divide the data into comprehensible groups, using a frequency

analysis to help me begin to organize some of the data.

Second, I analyzed the magnitude or the intensity of the concepts by reviewing the

transcripts and field notes for depth and richness of descriptions. The richness of the responses

by the participants helped me to recognize the dominant themes as they emerged. While each

participant shared their unique experiences, the magnitude of their explanations emerged with

the use of explanations shared by participants. One participant stated that having a mentor was

helpful because:

I always tried to participate pretty active and you know I was real engaged in listening to

all the stories and things that people shared. Because I like to hear experiences first hand

versus what a book tells me. So it kind of relates a little bit more to everyday life or that I can actually see someone else in that. That's kind of what I look for.

Another participant explained:

I was engaged with adults who had us structured in a common cause, mission in terms of being involved in athletics. So, I have had opportunities where I wasn't involved in those things. Sometimes I could be involved in some type of delinquent behavior, whether it's throwing rocks or breaking bottles and things of that nature. But when you're involved in athletics, I was involved in that. That took that idle time, that idle misbehavior time away.

These thick, rich descriptions of participants' experiences clearly explain how participants' feelings about their experiences with mentors affected their decisions to refrain from delinquency.

Next, developing a structure consists of classifying phenomena into logical categories and grouping them according to relationships of concepts within those categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In addition, it involved collapsing and expanding many individual categories that I eventually funneled into logical data categories. Then, I distilled the data to identify patterns and themes as they emerged according to the logical sequences and groups using the conceptual framework and theoretical analysis to sensibly structure the data. An example of how I categorized the interview responses is when a participant stated that "just being there," and teaching boys "how to be a man" and girls "how to behave like ladies" I grouped these responses in the mentoring category because these and similar examples describe how connecting or building relationships was valuable to youth to facilitate positive connections with staff and/or mentors. A logical category for these terms was mentoring which I modified as needed to

include participant explanations of how they described mentoring throughout my analysis of the data.

The fifth area, "causes," describes the social causes for a particular phenomenon. This area is a challenge to address since many social factors can influence how or why a youth decides to engage or not to engage in delinquency. However, responses from the participants for electing not to participate in delinquency consistently included descriptions of the value of their relationships with their mentors at the Boys and Girls Club. As an example, a participant in the Passport to Manhood program explained that he did not want to disappoint his mentor. He described his commitment to his mentor by comparing himself to the person, referencing the commitment that his mentor showed toward the Club. These types of comments lead me to conclude that social connections influenced the decision-making process of the participants. This response by the participant is an example how a Club member's connection to his mentor is a result of the Club members' experience with his mentor. This illustrates how and why a relationship that developed because of the Passport to Manhood program influenced a youth to behave in a manner that would not disappoint his mentor. Thus, this is one example of how one participant felt an influence by the Passport to Manhood program.

Educational factors may also play a role in this phenomenon, since staff and participants describe education as a key component of Club programs. Many participants described how the Executive Director "didn't play when it came to school work." This sentiment was clear among many participants who mentioned "the powerhour," or the first hour in the afterschool program, which was strictly set aside as a period for completing homework. Monitored and lead by mentors, the youth receive personal attention as individuals or as a group during the "powerhour." Although homework assistance is not a structured program at the Club, it can be

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associated with the mentorship component. While there may not be a direct correlation, there appears to be a relationship between mentorship and education and delinquency prevention as described by the participants in this study.

Lastly, the consequences or effects of the program refer to the changes that occur and whom they affect. In this study, the consequences sought by both former participants and Club employees included success for youth, defined as legitimate employment, furthering education, and becoming productive participants of the community. Although delinquency prevention was not explicitly envisioned as a consequence of the Club programs, some of the statements made by participants to describe the consequences sought by both former participants and staff include "staying out of trouble," "not being in the streets," and "not getting arrested." Additionally, character development, leadership, and educational development for youth are examples of the more positive consequences sought by both former participants and staff.

I used the conceptual framework and research questions as a guide to identify emerging trends such as reduced delinquency rates or increased graduation rates that related to the research model (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This is an example of how I "categorized data within the construct of my conceptual framework" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p.110). I then "assigned initial codes to relevant responses or information to begin substantive and then eventually theoretical coding" (Bloomberg & Volpe, p. 110). I organized trends in responses into relevant groups and categories, and then I analyzed them. Additionally, I maintained methodical journals and detailed notes as I reviewed the data to prevent any biases I may have as the researcher. Journaling allowed me, as the researcher, to maintain a timely record of my observations, intuitions, ideas, and considerations throughout the data collection process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I also incorporated all relevant data from the secondary data analysis of records as they

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pertained to the primary data. I also visually inspected these records, and I wrote comprehensive notes on relevant data. My field notes included a report of the facts and subjective impressions. I also printed and forwarded electronic copies of all of the documents I wanted to review in detail with approval from the director. I incorporated reflections on the secondary data analysis into the findings and kept them separate from the interview coding data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

In conclusion, I used research to understand how the staff and former participants perceived the Boys and Girls Club experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth. Juvenile delinquency deterrence is important to society for many reasons. Some of these reasons are: improved opportunities for youth to obtain an education and gainful employment, reduced costs in juvenile probation, and improved quality of life for youth. Conducting research on the relationship between community youth programs and juvenile delinquency is vital in developing more programs that better meet the needs of Harrisburg youth. Table 3 indicates the various research methods used for each interview question.

Overall research question: In what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth?

Table 3

Interview Question Operationalization Table

Data Sought	Research Requirements	Method
Does the Boys and Girls Club impact the local delinquency rate? What is the staff's understanding of why	Interviewees' perceptions of delinquency rates. Review of demographic or statistical data on Boys and Girls Club	Interview staff. Review of Records

juveniles engage in delinquent behavior?	records	
What do the leaders of the program see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Boys and Girls Club programs for the kids they serve? Why do they do the programs they do?	Interviewees' perceptions of programs	Interview staff.
What is the perspective of former Boys and Girls Club members on whether the programs they participated in helped keep them out of trouble?	Interviewees' perceptions of Programs	Interview of former participants
What programs were most/least effective at helping or not helping former members stay out of trouble?	Interviewees' perceptions of programs	Interview of former participants
Why were the programs effective or not effective?	Interviewees' perceptions of Programs	Interview of former participants
How does the program intersect with and/or make use of other resources and programs in the community?	Interviewees' perceptions.	Interview staff
	Interviewees' perceptions of program effectiveness	Interview staff
How do you see this program reducing delinquency? How are the programs effective in mitigating delinquency?	Interviewees' perceptions of program effectiveness	Interview staff
What is the B and G clubs formula for success and how can it be shared? What are the processes by which the Boys and Girls Club programs help prevent delinquency?	Interviewees' perceptions of program effectiveness	Interview staff

Issues of Trustworthiness

As the researcher, I focused on reliability and creating validity by associating theory with the information and data gathered from the subjects. Credibility and trustworthiness are essential to the research design. My researcher positionality, background, and interest in youth delinquency prevention served as a foundation for developing credibility and trustworthiness for this project. My experience and familiarity with youth in Harrisburg offers a reliable background of knowledge of the Harrisburg area and its residents. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explained that issues of trustworthiness in a qualitative study can be understood by addressing credibility, dependability, and transferability.

First, I ensured credibility during the interviews for this study by clearly explaining my researcher positionality and disclosing my background to the participants during our interviews. Using the existing records as a secondary data resource also supported credibility since these records are on file with the Boys and Girls Club. I used triangulation of the data where appropriate, using a fellow cohort member to examine and code data as well as applying multiple theories to analyze and explain the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Next, I addressed dependability by collecting the data using a digital recording device and having the interviews transcribed by a professional transcriber. I coded the results using the transcripts. In addition, I asked fellow colleagues to review and code a portion of the data to ensure inter-rater reliability. Additionally, to improve dependability, I kept a written journal of my thoughts and opinions throughout the data collection process and during the interviews to document any possible biases that may have arisen (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

The use of these techniques offered a comprehensive process for ensuring that the interviews were properly recorded and documented (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Lastly, I

accomplished transferability, described as an accurate interpretation of the context provided by the participants, by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the responses provided by the participants and a thorough case study analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) noted that, ultimately, transferability rather than generalizability should be the goal of a case study. Thus, knowing how to apply the values learned from the study in similar circumstances and environments is what drives the case study approach (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Patton, 2002).

My standpoint as the researcher throughout this research project was that of an interested community leader. Having an understanding of the operations of community organization that exist to serve youth allowed me, as a researcher, to see the macro-level as well as the micro-level issues that affect youth in their communities. I am familiar with many social issues that affect youth and inform their decision-making. The opportunity to know more about the science behind developing and sustaining a model program is immensely valuable for leaders and decisions-makers because they can create opportunities to truly turn around the lives of young people and make changes to their behavior that will affect the world.

Ethics

I submitted this study to the Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The institutional review board process ensures protection of human subjects participating in this study while protecting ethical interests of all participants involved. Research. (May, 2016). Retrieved from URL http://www.iup.edu/irb/. As there were no vulnerable subjects involved in this study, I received an expedited review for this study in accordance with the IRB guidelines. There were no vulnerable subjects involved in this study. All participants of this study varied in age but all were over 18 years old of various sexes and races. I recruited all participants by

sending flyers and recruitment letters through the Boys and Girls Club e-mail list-serv requesting volunteers for the study. I also recruited paid full time staff members using the Boys and Girls Club list-serv with flyers and recruitment letters. I posted these same flyers in common areas at the Boys and Girls Club to recruit employees and former members.

With the approval of the Executive Director, I conducted the interviews in designated areas (such as unoccupied offices, unused classrooms, or conference rooms) at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. While there was minimal risk to the participants, it was possible that some participants may have been affected by psychological strain due to their experiences as Boys and Girls Club employees or former participants. There was a chance that some Boys and Girls Club employees had difficult experiences to share, and the interview process may have been stressful. Similarly, previous participants may have had challenges or personal conflicts that may have arisen in the interview process. In the event that participants needed emotional support, I offered a referral to counseling services and a debriefing session.

Some benefits to participating in this study included a favorable outlook on how the Boys and Girls Club programs help the local community by preventing delinquency and highlighting the value of Boys and Girls Club employees due to their involvement in teaching the programs. There was also an overall benefit to the Boys and Girls Club as an organization that is instrumental in helping facilitate delinquency prevention. Furthermore, there is a potential benefit for former participants who may feel motivated by their influences in the Boys and Girls Club to promote the Club and/or similar programs for youth.

There was no monetary compensation as an incentive for participants to consent to the study; however, there were snacks offered during the interviews. A full disclosure of the purpose of the study was included in the informed consent signed by the participants when they

agreed to the study. I provided all participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time; I clearly explained this to each participant. There were no advantageous alternatives to participation offered to participants.

I was the only person who knew the names of respondents, and I assured each of them of confidentiality. Upon completion of the research, I shared my findings with participants but I did not reveal the names of the respondents. Some additional ethical safeguards used to protect the participants were: 1) ensuring confidentiality by using participant numbers instead of names; 2) protecting participants from harm by offering information for counseling services, victim assistance, and social services; 3) an institutionally reviewed and approved informed consent form to protect participants' rights throughout the course of the study; and 4) offering participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

Validity

I anticipated finding that the Boys and Girls Club programs have a positive influence on the community and that they prevent delinquent behavior among participating youth. There was a possibility, however, that the programs have no effect on delinquent behavior. Since I did not interview youth who are current participants, and their opinions and thoughts were not a part of this study, this does constitute a threat to the validity of the study. I requested data to track the program's effectiveness for previous participants, and I sought any relevant information related to delinquency from the Club's administrative staff to address this issue.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how the staff and former

participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program

outcomes as preventing delinquency. In this chapter, I illustrate how the Boys and Girls Club of

Harrisburg functions as an organization, how the Club creates a culture aimed at preventing

delinquent behavior, and how participants perceive staff and participant interactions as

preventing delinquency. This chapter includes the findings obtained from 18 interviews with

staff and former members of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg along with observations I

conducted during the interviews.

My review of secondary data for demographic information on current and/or previous

juvenile participants, program completion rates, and graduation and arrest rates drawn from a

Boys and Girls Club database was available with limited information for the Harrisburg Boys

and Girls Club individually. The Executive Director advised me that Club submits data annually

to national Boys and Girls Club databases in Atlanta, Georgia. At the Executive Director's

suggestion, I reviewed data from an evaluation of Boys and Girls Club of America's Career

Launch Program, a nationwide study conducted in 2008, which includes self-reported survey

data, on-site visits, telephone and in person interviews, and observations of Club staff and

participants. Twenty clubs participated in the study, including the Harrisburg Boys and Girls

Club.

Additionally, I incorporated data from the 2008 Career Launch Program and the 2014

National Youth Outcomes Initiative Report, an annual digital survey administered by the Boys

and Girls Club national headquarters to obtain data about Club performance, program

completion rates, graduation rates, participation, and other information pertaining to Club programs. The Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club submits data to both the Career Launch Program and the National Youth Outcomes Initiative on an annual basis; as such, these resources were rich secondary data resources for this study. These secondary data resources enhance this study by offering a data resource that analyzes Boys and Girls Clubs' data from a national perspective. For this study in particular, these secondary data resources help support the data provided by staff and former participants regarding their experiences. Generally, the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club staff and former participants shared their opinions on the value in mentoring, frequent participation in programming, and having a safe and positive environment where youth can engage in positive activities. These responses from the staff and former participants mirrored the data included in the 2008 Career Launch Program and the 2014 National Youth Outcomes Initiative.

The following discussion of the main findings is divided into three segments that describe how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg operates at various levels to reach the goal of preventing delinquency: (a) the institutional level at the macro level, (b) the cultural level, and (c) interactional level, both at the micro level. Regarding institutional-level factors implemented to prevent delinquency, I will discuss the perspectives of the Executive Director, as well as data collected from the organization's website and national surveys to convey how the organization operates to prevent delinquency. On the cultural level, I examine the goals and values of programs within the organization as well as the organizational spaces that influence the experience of staff and members and encourage delinquency prevention. Finally, when referring to interactions, I examine how staff and participants perceive positive relationships preventing youth from delinquent behaviors. By analyzing data at these three levels, institutional, cultural,

and interactional levels, my aim is to provide a holistic view and in-depth understanding based on the answers to my two research questions: 1) does the Boys and Girls Club prevent delinquency, and 2) how do staff and former participants of the Club perceive the experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth?

Delinquency Prevention at the Institutional Level

To understand how the Boys and Girls Club seeks to prevent delinquency as an institution, I reviewed the Club history statement and mission statement, data from the Club internal records, reports for juvenile delinquency arrest records, and the Boys and Girls Club national outcomes report for 2014, which was the most current data analysis report for the Club. At the macro level, an institutional level of analysis focuses on a comprehensive analysis of the Club as an organization. In this section, I review what I found in the history and mission statement that indicates a concern for delinquency prevention and communicates the Club's goal of delinquency prevention. Additionally, I discuss how offering stimulating programs and educational support are part of the operational framework that the Boys and Girls Club uses to prevent delinquency.

History Statement and Mission Statement

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg has a deep historical context that began with a mission to have a safe and positive place for boys and girls to gather. The history statement on the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg website states:

> The Boys & Girls Club of Harrisburg was founded as a part-time venture in 1939 at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Harrisburg, initially serving 75 boys. Today, we offer a drug-free, alcohol-free atmosphere with caring professionals. They provide not only a safe and positive place to be, but also offer programs geared to today's challenges through specific

structured and guidance-oriented activities to over 1,300 members. Our mission and story.

(2015, March). Retrieved from URL https://www.bgca.org/about-us/our-mission-story.

       The history statement personifies the purpose and goal of the original Club. The history

statement also illustrates the core goals of providing "a safe and positive place" with "a drug-

free, alcohol-free atmosphere with caring professionals," which are still important at the Club 78

years later. To address the questions of whether and/or how the Boys and Girls Club of

Harrisburg prevents delinquency, I obtained the current mission statement conveyed by the Club

on their website and conducted a search of the Club's purpose and mission on the local and

national websites and press releases relating to the Club's purpose and mission. The current

mission posted on the Harrisburg Club website states:

> The mission of the Boys & Girls Club of Harrisburg is to serve as a neighborhood based
>
> organization committed to serving youth of all background in developing self-esteem and
>
> character and to help them become responsible citizens by providing physical,
>
> recreational, social, educational and vocational programs. Our mission and story. (2015,
>
> March). Retrieved from URL https://www.bgca.org/about-us/our-mission-story.

       The current mission statement embodies the Club's priority of serving youth. To

reinforce the importance of this mission to serve young people, the Club posts the statement in

numerous spaces, including a banner inside the Club. This statement is also posted on a banner

inside the Club and quoted by the voice prompt of the main phone number when calling the

Club. One can often hear staff and former members relay the mission statement that the Club is

a "positive place for kids." Staff members who were former Club members described the nexus

between the past and the present as a continuation of the original culture from one generation to

the next. Three former members, who were currently on the staff at the time of the interviews,

pointed out that their children had been members, and that they now had grandchildren who participated in the Club. Their inter-generational commitment, and much of my data, reflects the Club's historical and current commitment to prioritizing youth development. These historical and current commitments are also expressed through administrative leadership and decision-making.

Administrative Guidance and Decision-Making

In our informal conversations, the Executive Director expressed a verbal commitment to the Club's goals to offer a safe, positive place for kids to flourish by focusing on their education and character development. The staff of the Boys and Girls Club indicated that the Executive Director is particularly passionate about educational development for youth and leads the organization using strictly enforced rules, structure, and guidance, as well as providing a safe and comfortable environment. The ways members summarize their experiences reflects the Executive Director's leadership goals. For example, while explaining her involvement in the SMART girls program in an interview, a former member shared, "I felt like it was like a room that I could go to and express myself. It wasn't any judgement and everyone was just talking and having a good heart to heart. So it was really good. I could go through that all over again." The Director of Operations also felt that the Executive Director's leadership offered stability for youth. In another interview, one unit director for the SMART girls program explained, "It's by proving a structured place with resources, caring staff, and quality programs to support some of the basic needs that help develop them into productive citizens." I personally witnessed the Executive Director taking on a familial role in her leadership. That is, she sought to create a welcoming and safe, comfortable environment by offering meals and snacks, greeting and showing affection towards youth with hugs, and having conversations with children about how

their day went and how they are feeling. In some ways, she took on the role of matriarch as I witnessed her capture the attention of all of the youth by making a simple a hand gesture and enforcing quiet time in the large meeting room as the children ate their meals. Throughout the day, as the Executive Director escorted me throughout the Club, she frequently gave random hugs to children, asked them how their day was going, and sat with a small group of young children to read a book. These interactive gestures were examples of how the Executive Director created a familial welcoming environment that staff followed or mimicked.

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg was one of few youth delinquency prevention program offered to all youth in the Harrisburg area regardless of their criminal history (or lack thereof) when I conducted this study. The YMCA and a few churches offer programs similar to those at the Boys and Girls Club, but they are only available for adjudicated youth who have been arrested and/or are on probation. The current Executive Director's vision incorporated a need for an all-inclusive program that positively encourages youth to succeed by focusing on education, character building, recreation, and becoming well-rounded young adults before delinquency occurs, rather than after adjudication. As a former schoolteacher and school administrator, the Executive Director's philosophy for a focus on educational success is woven throughout the daily programming at the Club. Her vision is unique among youth programs in the area.

The Harrisburg Club measures how well it prevents delinquency by utilizing the National Youth Outcomes (NYO) report which measures participating youth responses to assess how effectively Clubs are implementing the Formula for Impact and delivering an experience that supports positive youth development (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014). The Formula for Impact is a curriculum roadmap provided by the national Boys and Girls Club for Clubs to help

ensure that members achieve "academic success, good character, citizenship, and healthy

lifestyles." (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014, p.3). According to the national

organization, five key elements for positive youth development make up the Formula for Impact.

They include, "a safe, positive environment," "fun," "supportive relationships," "opportunities,

and expectations," and "recognition." The Formula also incorporates high-yield learning

activities, targeted programs, and regular attendance (Boys and Girls Club, 2016).

   The 2014 National Outcomes Surveys helps in providing data on the Boys and Girls Club

as a whole, but the researchers do not publish individual Club effectiveness such as the

Harrisburg Club as an individual entity. Even though an individual Club does not publish

statistics, the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club does use the Formula for Impact as a guide for

implementing the Club's mission statement. The Formula for Impact is used to established

baseline expectations for each Club, and every Club is expected to incorporate the Formula for

Impact into daily programming measures. The Harrisburg Club uses the data gathered from the

Formula for Impact to enhance, update, or remove elements that are relevant to the Harrisburg

Club.

   In our informal conversation, the Executive Director shared that data from the Formula

for Impact showed graduation rates among members were declining in 2013-2015. In the

Executive Director's opinion, the decline in high school graduation rates revealed a need for

Club staff to implement changes in their programming to improve a youth's likelihood for high

school graduation. The Executive Director and Club staff decided that a team approach with the

local Harrisburg high schools was the best approach to help the youth they serve. Staff

collaborate with high school teachers to discuss whether a Club member may need help with

their studies, or help with managing homework assignments, tutoring in specific areas, and other

necessary activities to help a Club member with academic success. After a thorough analysis, Club mentors and schoolteachers establish email communications channels amongst themselves to better help youth succeed with their educational needs and improve the Club member's chances of graduating from high school. This approach is one example of how the Club used data from the Formula for Impact to create a program responsive to youth needs.

<div align="center">**Program Approaches**</div>

I also observed an institutional commitment to delinquency prevention in the way staff approached programming. The programs were comprehensive, sought to maintain youth interest, and offered academic and career support. According to the Director of Operations, these comprehensive approaches "helped youth develop into productive citizens." The Director of Operations conveyed that these characteristics and skills "are important for youth because they offer realistic opportunities for them to obtain gainful employment, further their education, and gain the confidence to believe they have the ability to be productive members of society; without these things, they don't have any hope and they will probably end up in trouble."

Maintaining Youth Interest

Program staff and former participants agreed that programming that maintains the interest of youth was likely to prevent delinquency. For example, program components that teach youth hands on skills such as basic carpentry, art, sports, and health and hygiene engage students in activities they can use in their own personal lives. One staff member shared that young people join the Club because of the stimulating programs offered. He said, "Well, some of the kids that we got around here, they see all the activities, like games and activities that we been doing like going on field trips. Then like, once they come in here, they don't want to go home."

Another staff member suggested that the Club offered a variety of engaging programs to maintain diverse interests. She explained,

> So if you're interested in one area, if you're good in sports, we have some things that are designated towards that. If you're great at math, education, or you're interested in art, we support those needs too. So the mission of us is to find the things that you kind of gravitate towards, things that would, that you enjoy, that you do well, find the things that suit you best and try to make you flourish in those areas.

A former member who is now a staff member discussed how the variety of programs kept him interested and returning to the club. He said,

> And like I said, we always had something to do at this Boys and Girls Club that kept us busy on a constant basis. I mean when you walked in the door, there was something going on, rather, like I said there was art and crafts, the vocational department, you know what I mean, the educational department, the physical department, the social rec department. No matter what, something was going on in every department. Every individual staff member that was running those departments kept you engaged, and kept you doing things.

In our brief conversations, I often heard the Executive Director also express the need to keep the young people continuously engaged. She suggested it was important for all young people to explore their interests, including education, athletics, art, and music, so that they would return to the Club and develop personal interests. As a result, she ensured a variety of programs were created to meet the varying needs of youth. These descriptions coincide with Hirschi's social bonding theories and the elements of commitment and involvement in which Hirschi describes how engagement and participation in social entities under with commitments and involvements

with employment or dedicated tasks contribute to delinquency prevention (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995; Hirschi, 1969).

For example, The SMART girls program designed for girls ages eight through seventeen, teaches girls personal care, social skills, and coping and negotiation skills. Club staff keep the girls engaged by incorporating current issues such as social media, daily occurrences shared by the girls, and real world life lessons. Mentors, guest speakers, and interactive activities such as role-playing and group assignments incorporate relevant current events and life experiences into the appropriate sessions using shared experiences.

Similarly, The Passport to Manhood program engages young men by using a "passport" for the boys to log 14 sessions designed to enhance their self-esteem, develop decision-making skills, and conflict avoidance. Adult staff members and mentors who guide the boys through community service projects and classroom activities teach the sessions. Using the "passport" model helps the boys look forward to a goal while keeping them engaged through real world activities.

Inspiring Teens to Graduate, a program for boys and girls ages twelve to eighteen seeks to expose teens to an array of careers and secondary education options. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Youth are exposed to first-hand experience through job shadowing, guest speakers, and hands-on projects. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Exposing youth to the college application process, the college campus experience, along with meetings with college advisors to allow them to discuss their future career plans keeps youth engaged as they interact with college professors and students. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL

(http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).   Staff and mentors also keep teens engaged by having the teens actively participating in events such as job shadowing where youth are offered an opportunity to work alongside a working professional such as a nurse in a hospital, bank executives, and attorneys. These hands on experiences keep youth engaged by connecting youth with viable resources to further their future aspirations in a particular career field or college. The program model that includes practice college applications, entrance exams, financial aid information sessions, college tours, and exposure to career opportunities is a platform to "inspire teens to graduate" from high school by showing youth the potential for careers in their future. As a whole, inspiring teens to graduate attempts to offer a complete depiction for youth to learn, research, and experience the possibilities for their future.

   The Keystone Club program teaches character and leadership development for "academic success, career preparation and community service" for both male and female youth ages 14-18. Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).   Staff keep youth engaged by allowing youth to spearhead community events such as senior citizen assistance initiatives, neighborhood clean-ups, food banks, holiday events or fundraisers as a way of helping others in their community while developing leadership skills and creating a purpose for themselves within their community (Sweigart & Boyd, 2009). Youth are encouraged to learn about project management, human resources, inventory and finance, time management, cohesion, cooperation, and communication among many other skills (Sweigart & Boyd, 2009). The guided independence engages youth by allowing youth to participate through trial and error as they learn to problem solve and develop their own techniques to deal with issues that arise throughout their project management endeavors.

Herrera and Arbreton (2003) described the need for youth engagement as a necessary element in program development. As a whole, creating engaging activities and programming is most valued among youth (Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). By actively participating in activities and programs throughout the Club, youth demonstrate their devotion to the Club, thus showing their appreciation and desire to continue staying out of trouble. Providing academic and career exploration support is also a program approach utilized by the Club to prevent delinquency.

Academic and Career Exploration Support

In its efforts to prevent delinquency, the institution also sought to implement programs that engaged students in academic and career exploration support. The staff and former participants stressed the importance of scholastic achievement to prepare youth for the future. Students and staff described the various resources that were made available to help them with their studies, including maintaining a working relationship with schoolteachers to communicate student needs.

One of the most essential academic support programs was the "powerhour" which the staff described as "the first priority" for all youth. In speaking with staff and observing youth at the Club, I learned that the powerhour is scheduled immediately after the youth arrive at the Club after school. Staff shared that youth are offered a snack and then directed into the library, study areas, or the computer lab where an adult monitors them as they complete homework for at least one hour every day. For youth that do not have homework or are finished before the hour, an hour of educational enrichment is encouraged. This organized format for youth to engage in a routine facilitates discipline through structure and encouragement for youth to complete their schoolwork.

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The Executive Director is very passionate about encouraging youth to succeed in their education and relies on results from The National Outcomes Survey to inform educational programming. The National Outcomes Survey describes educational encouragement programs like powerhour as a tool for youth to gain confidence in school and improve attendance, and in turn, improve grades and graduation rates. Teaching youth structured studying habits for their educational benefit is important because it can help youth to become better students. Improving a child's educational success can lead to him or her keeping their interest in school and achieving better grades, and eventually, graduating from high school. Educational enrichment for youth is important because preparing youth for their future helps them develop in their educational opportunities (Quinn, 1999).

According to the Boys and Girls Club, the Career Launch is another essential educational support program the Career Launch program that helps to facilitate delinquency prevention by offering career exploration for youth as a means for opportunities for youth to succeed. The core elements of the Career Launch help to eliminate the risk factors that exist for youth as described in criminological theories such as differential opportunity theory where Career Launch offers career skills and opportunities for youth to awaken positive paths for youth to thrive. In this program, the national Boys and Girls Club of America provides the curriculum, and the curriculum is implemented in the Harrisburg site. The program consists of 22 competency-based activities, designed for a small group setting, divided into four units: (1) goal setting; (2) career exploration; (3) job search skills; and (4) keeping the job (Gallup-Black, 2008). The Career Launch "encourages Club members ages thirteen to eighteen to assess their skills and interests, explore careers, make sound educational decisions, and prepare to join our nation's work force".

Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html).

In a 2008 review of the Career Launch program, Gallup-Black (2008) highlighted the value of Club Executive Directors who build relationships with local business and community leaders. I also observed the Harrisburg Executive Director make community connections by calling on local doctors, attorneys, firefighters, police officers, professional athletes, judges, and business executives to mentor youth, be present for activities, and tutor for powerhour.

Moreover, former participants and staff described learning skills, especially in the trades, as an asset for youth to feel a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. The Director of Operations at the Harrisburg Club stated that the emphasis on programming for life skills is unique to Harrisburg; it is not included in traditional program models. Learning how to make a bookshelf, change a light fixture, or mount a picture frame may all seem like basic, common skills, but they were described as valuable skills to youth who may dream of owning a home, and who may not be taught these skills at home. Exposing youth to skilled trades also opens doors for many blue-collar jobs that may lead to well-paying professional careers, thus creating opportunities for youth in the future.

Participants reinforced the notion that programs that teach youth academic and career skills help prevent and reduce delinquency among participating youth. A staff member shared his sentiments by suggesting that offering youth educational activities during times when school is not in session keeps them engaged. This is an example of the attachment element of social bonding theory where a staff member interacts with a youth in a manner that positively influences him or her. He said:

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The kids aren't in school in the summer. Now what do they do? Come to the Club where they're productive; they can read; they can do homework; help in a summer packet. They can still exercise and still work on a lot of different things to keep them productive, instead of a summer brain drain that really tends to happen over the summer months. So there's a lot of great things in what we do, which is why we're here to serve the kids.

Likewise, a former member explained how the Club activities got him thinking about his future educational goals. He said:

I've always been taught you have to go to college. And it's like, I wanted to go but like college isn't for everyone. So, I wasn't too sure that I wanted to go. But then like they taught me like there's more opportunities if you go to college. And there's so many career choices out there that you might not know about just being in one place. So it's just like it is helping me open up and see that I really did want to go to college. And even five years later I'm still here.

A staff member who was a former participant shared his observation that when students are trained in a trade, they learn valuable career and life skills. He said,

I'm a very big advocate of kids with their education and also learning a service trade and us having the Industrial Arts Center and giving our kids the opportunity to recognize tools, using some hand tools, small tools, machinery tools, I think that is going to go a long way; it has gone a long way. I know so many of our past alumni who have their own construction businesses, who are electricians, who are laborers, who are truck drivers, and I think having, once again a sense of learning, you know, what the wood shop has done and giving them a sense of just having a creative, and in terms of being creative, in terms of using your hands, and having those trade work. I think that's very important.

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Cause education is very important, everyone is not going to go to college. Everyone is not going to have a Masters Degrees, however I think everyone can learn to do something with their hands. Whether its change tires or – it's going to help them in the long run in becoming homeowners. If they can, you know we have kids who are learning how to patch holes in dry wall, learn how to fix a simple socket.

In analyzing the institutional elements that contribute to delinquency prevention at the Harrisburg Club, I found that the history and mission statement indicate a concern for delinquency prevention and programs are organized and designed to prevent delinquency. Administrative guidance and decision making help reinforce the goal of delinquency prevention by offering structure, guidance, and support for the programs, tools, and mentoring that help youth succeed. In addition, programs are set up to support the youth's individual development by incorporating material relevant to young people's everyday lives. Goals of maintaining youth interest through engaging activities, and academic and career exploration are elements of the operational framework that the Boys and Girls Club uses to prevent delinquency. In the next section, I illustrate how the organization worked to prevent delinquency by creating a culture where students felt safe, engaged, and respected.

Delinquency Prevention at the Cultural Level

In this section, I discuss the aspects of the culture at the Boys and Girls Club that are congruent with the goal of delinquency prevention. For purposes of this study, culture is defined as "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes [the Boys and Girls Club] as an institution or organization" Definition of culture. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture. This micro level of analysis explains how cultural elements affect youth in terms of prevention efforts. The Club promotes

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character development in a safe and positive environment for youth to engage through mentoring and other activities. The Club staff conveyed that the cultural environment at the Club is an essential part of building the path for success for youth.

Safe and Positive Spaces

The National Outcomes data for the Club recognizes "a safe, positive environment" as a key element for positive youth development.   One way the Club promotes a culture of delinquency prevention is by providing safe and positive physical spaces for youth. The Club buildings are logistically designed to be safe by having a lobby and reception area to secure access into the Club. Adults are not permitted into any areas where children gather without a pre-issued Boys and Girls Club identification card provided after a series of child abuse and criminal history clearances. Parents and guardians are only allowed in the lobby, and a staff member summons children into the lobby to meet parents and guardians. During my observations at the Clubs, it was apparent that youth entering the Clubs were familiar with the layout and routine of what they were expected to do as they entered.

The Executive Director shared several safety concerns with unauthorized adults or unwelcomed children entering the Clubs. Those concerns were inspired by former incidences such as custody disputes among families where children are exchanged between relatives, foster children who may have issues with biological relatives, conflicts or fights that originate in neighborhoods or schools which could continue into the Club, and strangers that could try to enter without prior authorization and legally mandated child abuse and criminal background checks. The Executive Director explained that throughout the year, schedules are created to parallel the school district, so youth have a routine and know they can count on the Club as somewhere to go. Safety was described by the Executive Director and staff in similar ways.

First, in terms of physical environment the Club staff were vigilant to ensure that local crimes such as shootings, fighting, drugs, or any other type of violent acts do not seep into the Club from the neighborhoods. Second, in terms of adult supervision, staff and mentors try to convey a welcoming environment by greeting the children and engaging in casual conversations. Third, the Executive Director and staff expressed that having a welcoming and safe, comfortable environment offers youth a sense of belongingness that they may not feel at their homes. The Club staff show genuine interest in youth while providing structure and encouragement, which are all attempts to make youth feel welcome and free from the stresses of urban crime, instabilities that may exist in their home environments, and a physical space where they can feel at ease.

Previous evaluations of Boy's and Girl's Club across the country illustrate that having a safe and positive place for boys and girls to gather prevents delinquency. In their study of Boys and Girls Clubs, Anderson-Butcher et al. (2003), for example, noted that, given consistent opportunities for participation, the Boys and Girls Club reduces delinquent behavior in youth because it decreases the presence of risk factors. Similarly, Carruthers and Busser (2000) found that "involvement in the Boys and Girls Club produced three central outcomes: a nurturing environment, the acquisition of positive behaviors, and the development of competence and self-esteem" (p. 50).

Former participants were grateful they had a safe place to go within high crime neighborhoods. One former member shared:

> That's how it was for me at first. And then because, like I said, I didn't like coming here at first. Then when I started coming back here, joining programs and all that, I started liking it instead of being out there on the streets…While I was a participant, well back

then, in my day, when I was coming here, there were so many kids being in trouble. So

they wanted to come here so they could get off the streets. It was that, or jail, or

cemetery. So they'd rather come here than be out on the streets; that's how it was to me.

All of the former participants expressed how being in the Club was a sense of relief, as illustrated

by one former participant who felt comfort knowing that he would "have a meal, something to

do, and just someone there" at the Club. Staff also shared stories of "kids in the neighborhood

getting shot or killed just two or three blocks away" as they described their personal conflicts

with knowing that the "kids had somewhere to be until 6 or 8 o'clock at night, but eventually,

they have to leave." These descriptions describe how existing strains in a youth's life are

reduced or minimized while he or she participates in the Club, where he or she feels shielded

from the existing strains in their neighborhood while they are at the Club (Merton, 1992).

While the Club as a whole provided a safe place for youth, in some cases, staff found

physical space to be problematic. Even with recent renovations in some areas, the multi-purpose

use of the few classrooms made it difficult for staff to spend what they deemed to be adequate

time in their classes and activities. "With limited resources, there's only so much you can do," a

staff member explained. Nonetheless, the "game rooms, technology center, library, athletic

courts, playgrounds and lounge, all offered former members "a lot to choose from depending on

what's going on."

A safe, comfortable environment is conceptualized as a place where youth can be,

without worrying about being a victim of a crime (such as assaults, harassment, shootings) free

of drugs and alcohol, and supervised by adults. Creating safe and supportive youth voice

environments. (March, 2016). Retrieved from URL https://freechild.org/creating-safe-and-

supportive-youth-voice-environments/. A safe environment creates a comfortable ambiance for

youth to feel welcome. Having a safe and comfortable environment coincides with the Boys and Girls Club mission, and is illustrated in programs, mentoring, and the relationships developed between staff and youth.

A number of interviewees described how providing a safe environment helped youth make informed decisions. One staff member explained that when participants feel safe, they prefer to be in the Club than on the streets. This is another example of how strains or barriers are minimized for a youth while she is at the Club. The staff member elaborated,

Because if you look, during the school year, the children can be here up to eight o'clock. All right, most crime they say is committed between three and nine o'clock. But we have children in here. We're packed and they don't want to go home. It's like you have to put them out. It's like, get out, I got to go home. I got children that I need to go home to. You know my grandchildren. You have to go home. But they're here and like you say, they may not be doing what I want them to do. Okay, but they're here. They might be on their cell phones, but they're here. They're not out on a corner; they're not hanging out with some of their peers who we've had to suspend from the Club because of their negative influence. So you can see the divide. Because now that they're out there you can also see the change in the behavior of the ones that are still in here. All right, when that, I'll say, "bad apple" is not there.

Another staff member explained why the Club kept members out of trouble. He said,

I feel like it gives them somewhere to go and like it's a structured, like it's a lot of structure for them. I know personally I don't like to sit in the house. And like this gives me something to do. Even though I'm working now, but before it's like it was something for me to get outside the house and interact with other people.

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Echoing his sentiments, another staff member indicated how athletic programs had a lot to do with keeping the youth safe. This is also an example of the involvement element in social bonding theory where participation in a structured activity is deemed as an important element in social bonding to reduce delinquency (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). The staff member said,

> Instead of just letting them roam free outside, we have basketball and productive things that they can be doing here and that they participate and engage in here. It is easier to have a group of kids here same age together, playing basketball, in a safe environment. There's never been anything unsafe here, then just imagine what they're doing outside for eight hours.

Participants repeatedly suggested the Club provides a safe environment for youth. The physical locations of the two Club facilities I visited were both in urban areas in Harrisburg City and are considered by the media sources such as the local newspaper, *The Patriot News,* as "high crime neighborhoods." The Director of Operations physically pointed two blocks east of the Club building and shared that a young male was killed in a shooting a few weeks before my study began. When describing the safety of the Club, he explained how a few of the youth members knew the victim and two were related to the victim. He noted, "this is what our kids are dealing with, we are very much aware of what's going on around here." He went on to explain how reassuring the children and making them feel safe inside the Club helps youth realize that they have more productive options than crime or violence.

A study conducted by the United States Bureau of Justice (2000) called for the presence of Boys and Girls Clubs in urban neighborhoods, especially in public housing projects where crime is high. A 2000 Bureau of Justice Report claimed:

Boys & Girls Clubs in public housing communities have had a significant impact on

juvenile crime (reduced 13 percent), drug activity (reduced 22 percent), and the presence

of crack cocaine (reduced 25 percent). The study also found that Clubs improved the

overall quality of life for the children and families who reside in public housing

developments (Ashcroft, 2001).

According to the Club Executive Director, the physical locations of the Boys and Girls

Clubs of Harrisburg offer places that are free from criminal activity, drugs, and violence for

youth who are surrounded by these activities their neighborhoods. The Club locations I studied

were frequently reported high crime areas by the local newspaper *The Patriot News.* PA Penn

Live (March, 2015). Retrieved from URL http://www.pennlive.com/#/0. Additionally, the

police blotters on the "Crime Watch" website were reviewed. Crime watch Pennsylvania.

March, 2015). Retrieved from URL https://www.crimewatchpa.com/.

Character Development

Not only did physical spaces create a culture for delinquency prevention, the club also

had the goal of developing the character of youth participants to prevent delinquency. The tenant

of belief under social bonding theory can be described as an applicable theory in addressing

character development since the spirit of the Club's attitudes and concepts are embodied by the

Club staff through their actions (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995). According to the Club

Executive Director, character is a foundational element for helping youth learn how to build and

develop relationships to interact in their society. The Executive Director explained that

education and character development are the elements that reflect program effectiveness. Youth

who complete programs such as SMART Girls, Passport to Manhood, Keystone, and Inspiring

Teens to Graduate are more likely than youth of similar backgrounds who do not complete the

programs to never graduate high school, attend college, or seek employment. While delinquency prevention was not an element by which program effectiveness was measured, character development was mentioned by the majority of Club staff and former members as a core value for the Club's programs.

Generally, "character" was described by staff and former members, as responsibility, self-awareness, and personal reflection to make sound decisions. Staff described how teaching youth about character is incorporated throughout daily activities and programs. Weaving these examples demonstrates an effort by staff to create bonds through belief as described in social bonding theory (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995; Hirschi, 1969). Bullying prevention exercises, for example, help to build character by teaching youth to respect others regardless of differences. Explaining why someone should intervene when they see acts of bullying is also part of character building and teaches youth healthy decision making, care and respect for others, and self-respect. Additionally, this is an example of how strains are minimized for youth by developing positive interactions through positive stimuli in demonstrating appropriate behavior (Agnew, 1992).

Staff also described how teaching youth to reflect on their daily interactions, whether positive or negative, helps to build character by helping youth through "life lessons." For example, an executive staff member was very passionate in describing self-reflection as an essential element in the Club program models. He explained, "Those discussions about how and why things happen or don't happen are very valuable in showing kids right from wrong and what their place and purpose is in the world." Staff utilized local crimes and scenarios that were publicized on the news and social media (i.e. shootings, robberies, and other crimes) along with personal experiences as examples of showing youth insecurities in their worlds.

Additionally, staff explained that allowing youth freedom to make mistakes and learn from them is a valuable way to develop character. A former member noted, "Yes, cause like if you do something bad at the club, then you're what is the word… not reprimanded but you're held accountable." Another former member illustrated how going through several programs and being mentored developed his character development. He said,

> I learned a lot of valuable information and also I picked up a lot of skills and was able to really develop a certain mind-set moving forward, just based off some of the mentors that were part of the program at that time. Especially our Passport to Manhood program and powerhour which really challenged certain areas, helped in development, in growing up in a single parent household. It was good.

Another former participant described how values learned in the Smart Girls program deterred her from fighting. She said,

> It [Smart Girls] just showed me that I don't have to go out and do stuff because well, smart girls to do stuff, to get in fights because I'm angry with some girl and pick a fight. It showed me how to deal with my own problems instead of take them out on somebody else.

Additionally a former member shared how the Passport to Manhood program taught him to respect women. He said, "The Passport to Manhood taught me a lot how to be a man, be respectful to all others including the women." Similarly, another participant shared about the same program, "For Passport to Manhood they, well, Mr. Jones was the teacher at the time and he just, he told us and gave us like tools for maturing and growing up in a positive light in a sense."

Staff described character building as an "everyday thing," a holistic approach to teaching youth about character development in various ways that is woven into the fabric of the program models. Another staff member described character building by stating: "I think the best way to describe that is our mission. Our mission is to create quality and good character among young people to become productive citizens in a nut shell."

Character development is a program component that is frequently cited as preventing delinquency For example, Anderson-Butcher et al. (2003) and Quinn (1999), who studied Boys' and Girls' Clubs, found that participating youth are more likely to develop favorable characteristics such as an interest in school and their community and participate in favorable recreational activities. Ultimately, developing character is a beneficial approach in preventing or reducing delinquency (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003; Quinn, 1999).

The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg has created a culture to prevent delinquency. The Club provides a safe and positive space for youth to develop, engage, and participate in favorable activities. Club programs have the goals of promoting positive behavior, healthy lifestyles and attitudes, and progressive behavior models for youth. By creating this culture, Club staff encourage youth to make sound decisions that improve their lives while preventing delinquency.

Delinquency Prevention at the Interactional Level

In this section, I examine how positive interactions reinforce the organizational goal of delinquency prevention. The interactional level of analysis is conceptualized at the micro level of analysis since this level analyzes how staff and youth interact with each other on an individual level. I specifically examine how program curriculum teaches youth to interact positively, how adult/youth mentoring interactions are geared toward delinquency prevention, and how staff

commitment and engagement encourages youth to make well-rounded decisions and abstain from delinquency.

Program Curriculum

Youth participants have the opportunity to engage socially and interact both formally, through the programs in which they participate, and informally such as when they are greeted as they enter the Club. Formal social interactions in structured programs such as Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate all incorporate lessons for social development. These interactions range from manners such as learning to say "please" and "thank you," to making eye contact and shaking hands. The curriculum for these programs incorporates training on such interactions as skills for job interviews, role playing for conflict resolution, and open discussions on how to conduct oneself in social settings, professional situations, and general self-comportment.

Since this study was conducted during the summer camp, there were many informal recreational activities held outside in which students had opportunities to learn valuable interactional skills. Staff members described "rec" as "valuable because youth learn a lot, just by playing, like learning rules, how to respect other people's space without fighting, waiting their turn, and being competitive." During my observations, I noticed team dynamics develop as children formed their own small groups to play games such as basketball, tag, and dodgeball.

As staff organized and monitored play and recreation, they were engaged with youth throughout the activity times. Staff offered incentives for good behavior which could be accumulated for positive reinforcements such as ice cream treats, gift cards, and other items of interest that were age appropriate for perspective teams. Staff shared that "keeping them busy

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keeps them out of trouble." The opportunities for physical activity offered by the club and encouraged by staff were instrumental in keeping youth engaged in the Club.

Teaching youth social interactional skills in both informal and formal settings fall in line with the Boys and Girls Club mission statement and are a fundamental element in the program curricula. Program curricula that teach youth positive interactional skills helps youth with coping skills such as conflict resolution where their problem solving skills can be used to diffuse conflict, disagreement, or disputes. Additionally, self-reflection, where youth can use their strengths and weaknesses to work through projects, personal challenges, or helping others, can all contribute to the betterment of a Club member's sense of self. These skills, reflections, and insight can be further developed through mentoring relationships.

Mentoring Relationships and Staff/Youth Interactions

In our conversations, the Executive Director expressed that youth need positive role models and mentors and ensured relationship building was part of the program models. The Executive Director's commitment to making a structured yet inviting ambiance was evident in how she required staff to receive incoming youth. Youth arrive at the Club through the main lobby where they greet a clerk who checks the children in through a computerized system that takes attendance. The youth enter a large common area that serves as a cafeteria, study, room, game room, and assembly hall. They are greeted by their assigned small group leaders, and all of the staff members greet and speak with the youth as they arrive in the common area.

Staff are also encouraged to eat meals with youth, who are allowed to pick up a meal tray served by staff. According to the Director of Operations, "The meals here are a big deal because some of these kids would probably go hungry; these might be the only meals they get besides school". The meal times are also important because youth have the opportunity to interact with

staff in a relaxed and unstructured environment. They can share conversation over a meal and really build relationships with one another.

The Director of Operations explained that many layers of relationship building have to occur for trust to develop between youth and the Club staff. In additional to meal times, bonding occurs during recreational time in the playground, basketball courts, and arts and crafts activities. A former member shared the value he saw in adult mentors sharing their personal experiences. He said,

> I always tried to participate pretty active and you know I was real engaged in listening to all the stories and things that people shared. Because I like to hear experiences first hand versus what a book tells me. So it kind of relates a little bit more to everyday life or that I can actually see someone else in that.

The interactions between staff and youth allowed staff to share life lessons that taught youth to "be ready for the world" and "know how to be a good citizen." A staff member shared that "some kids thrive because they work hard and we help them through everyday life and we watch them grow and help them along the way," referring to the work and time staff put in to developing relationships with students and the positive outcomes this mentoring has on the young person's future. These social bonds created between youth and staff decrease the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent behaviors (Hirschi 1969, 2001). Forming relationships with staff reduces the impact of risk factors such as negative familial influences, poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure and support, and exposure to violence. Instead, by forming strong bonds to staff, youth are kept busy, engaged, and mentored by people who care for their well-being.

Staff members seek to create a comfortable environment where youth can flourish by understanding they have an important role to play in the development of youth. The Club staff knew they had to be regularly present and consistent to convey their commitment to youth. Moreover, they also knew that they were likely one of only a few adults on which the youth could rely. In an emotional account, the program unit director for the SMART Girls program explained her role in the lives of the youth she served. She said,

> some of these kids don't have any good role models in their lives. If they do something wrong they come to me. I'm like where's the staff in the gym? They coming to me because they can sit and talk to me. You know what I mean? I might discipline them, like fuss at them, 'you can't do that' or whatever. But then I have to sit them down and like, 'why did you do it. You know you wasn't supposed to do that' or 'give me a high five or give me a hug' you know what I mean? And sometimes I be like, 'I love you'. If nobody told you today, I love you. You know what I mean?

As I spoke with another program unit director for the John N. Hall Clubhouse, in his shared office space, I observed many motivational quotes and pictures covering his walls from the floor to the ceiling. There were also several large photos of him (the program director) posing with several celebrities. He shared how the motivational quotes and pictures serve as visual aids to help him illustrate stories and quotes when he speaks with children about things such as attitude, hard work, emotions, and other topics. He went on to state, "When I talk to them, they see it, hear it, and then we talk about it." This staff member, among several others, described how one on one conversations in informal settings, and taking the time to explain how and why certain behaviors are more acceptable than others, is important in teaching youth how to work through challenges, thinking about how to react to adversity, and listen to others.

Relationship building was also a key component of program curriculum. For example, the Passport to Manhood and SMART girls programs encouraged discussion among young men and ladies about healthy relationships with family, friends, educators, employers, and people in general. While touring the building at the Angino Clubhouse, I observed tools used for role playing, expression time, and talking circles, which taught youth how to diffuse conflicts, discuss anger and fear, and properly express their feelings. The students used sketch pads, videos, scripted scenarios, and printed worksheets to develop their relationship building skills. They sat in a comfortable room that provided large couches, a round table with chairs and bookshelves and other décor throughout. A SMART Girls program staff member, concerned about making girls feel comfortable, explained she wants "every one of her girls to feel comfortable, like one of my own children in here."

Mentoring relationship building among staff and youth at the Club contributes to the Club's delinquency prevention efforts in several aspects. First, a positive adult role model for youth offers youth individual attention that can help create a personal bond with a responsible adult that is concerned for their well-being. Second, mentors are progressive role models that are real people, not athletes or celebrities, that share similar experiences with Club youth. Having an adult role model that can reflect on similar issues, problems, and perspectives offers youth hope that they too can grow up to be positive role models and/or responsible adults without engaging in delinquency. Finally, giving youth the opportunity to build relationships or bonds with someone that is a positive influence demonstrates to youth that there are alternatives to delinquency that do not involve criminal behavior. As such, the engagement and commitment of staff is a key element in helping youth build relationships to help youth refrain from engaging in delinquency.

Staff Commitment and Engagement

Staff commitment is essential for adequate youth mentoring and forming trusting relationships with youth. Staff expressed their emotional attachment to many of the youth at the Club. One staff member that leads the Smart Girls program shared many personal stories of how much she cares for the girls in her program. She was moved to tears during our interview and stated that she treats the kids at the Club like her "babies." A quote from an executive staff member illustrates how much staff are committed to youth. He said,

> The strengths are always the staff and level of commitment of our staff. We have some great staff on board who show a genuine interest in our children. They show a genuine love and through that I believe that resonates to the kids responding in a positive way. I think that, you know, those are pretty good indicators of success stories for our kids.

In my observations and discussions with the Executive Director, I learned that staff commitment is highly valued as a tool to keep youth returning and participating in Club programs. The Boys and Girls Club National Outcomes report also values the commitment of staff and illustrates that "staff practices that are most likely to boost the Club Experience." The report suggests programs are most successful when staff know all Club members' names, have planned activities and programs for all or most of each day, and employ positive reinforcement to manage behavior"(National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014, p.11)." The Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club staff exemplified the aforementioned practices as they interacted with the youth at the Club. The relationships were akin to a welcoming and safe, comfortable environment on various levels from maternal and/or paternal connections with the older staff members, to sibling-like interactions among the younger staff and youth.

A staff member summarized the level of commitment of many of the staff as follows,

You know what I mean, with kids, I have grandkids so I treat them how I treat my grandkids. I have grandkids here. I treat them no different. When they do something wrong in that group – my grandkids are spoiled but when they come here, they think they're supposed to have certain privileges. No, they're not. You do something, you're going to get scolded for it. You're going to go home or whatever the case may be. I don't treat them no better than the others. Like I love the kids and especially the girls, the boys too.

Another staff member echoed her sentiments by explaining how important it is for staff to show participants they are genuinely interested in them. She said,

The strengths are always and always is the staff and level of commitment of our staff. We have some great staff on board who show a genuine interest in our children. They show a genuine love and through that I believe that resonates to the kids responding in a positive way. I think that, you know, those are pretty good indicators of success stories for our kids.

A former member, who is now a staff member, illustrated how when participants perceive staff as committed, they also deter young people from delinquency. She said,

I mean really, if people would use the Boys and Girls Club more, I mean, you can get a whole lot out of it. I mean, folks don't realize how much you can get out of this place, especially when it comes to the staff. You know what I mean, because the staff that they hire, that the Club Director hires, the staff is engaged. They like doing what they do. And they bring that to the table every day. You know, and that's a good thing. Especially if you're trying to keep them from being out there on those corners.

The relationship between having dedicated staff that is committed to providing quality programming and the resulting positive outcomes for youth is evident. Former participants spoke highly of staff who mentored them to adulthood. They shared specific examples of receiving help from staff who cared about their future. Similarly, staff participants showed genuine care for the youth they mentored and compared their relationships to the youth at the Club to their relationships within their own family (i.e. children, grandchildren, and other family members).

Consistent with other studies (Gallop & Black, 2008; Jaffe & Baker, 2006) my findings reveal several important elements where engaged staff play an essential role in helping youth prevent delinquency. These include the staff's ability to foster social interaction among youth, recognize social and emotional needs and work through problems together or refer youth to needed social services, recognizing and addressing aggressive behavior, and building trusting and caring mentoring relationships.

Challenges

While most staff were motivated and passionate about their engagement with youth, they found difficulty doing their job because the organization offered limited training. Credentialed staff with prior experience in teaching, counseling, social services desired professional development not only for themselves but especially for staff without formal training. One participant explained, "How do these young staff know where to send these kids to? Some of them have *real* (emphasis added) problems. How do they know where to send them? They can't deal with that." Staff expressed concern that inexperienced and untrained staff could not provide appropriate services for youth who may need extensive therapy, social services, or assistance with learning disabilities.

The Boys and Girls Club did not have a formal training process for their staff beyond on-the-job training. The program director confirmed that there is no formal training for staff, and the organization relies on the staff participants' prior experiences and internal training for them to learn the job. As the SMART Girls program director explained, the organization found training to be too expensive to incorporate consistent and necessary staff development trainings.

While no formal training exists for new hires, I did learn there were training binders created by staff over the years which included pamphlets, guidelines, newspaper articles, and handwritten notes for teaching courses such as SMART girls and Inspiring Teens. The lack of training for Harrisburg Club staff is unfortunate given that The National Outcomes Survey 2014 noted, "Youth development professionals who received training in program planning are associated with more Club members reporting an Optimal Club Experience" (p. 5). The Optimal Club Experience is described as providing "high-yield activities and targeted programs, actively encourage young people to attend more frequently, and employ Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development" (National Youth Outcomes Report, 2014, p.5). That is, the Optimal Club Experience is one that offers interesting program activities that youth attend on a regular basis while incorporating the Five Key Elements for Positive program activities of 1) a safe, positive place for kids 2) fun 3) supportive relationships 4) opportunities and expectations and 5) recognition Programs and Services. (2015, March). Retrieved from URL (http://www.bgchbg.org/programs-services.html). Training staff that can convey the Optimal Club Experience is important because it can increase the potential for youth to successfully participate and engage in Club programs. However, the Executive Director suggested hiring experienced staff to work with youth is a challenge professionally and financially and recognized the lack of training as a detriment to the programs. The Executive Director found value in hiring

staff that are committed and willing to carry on the mission of the Club and deemed these experienced staff as integral since training funding is highly unlikely. Despite a lack of necessary training, staff were highly committed to the mission of the organization and program goals.

The findings of this research support the works of researchers such as Greenwood (2012) and Hawkins and Weis (1985) who suggested that youth who are offered structured activities and direction are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg provide opportunities and outlets for youth to keep them engaged, offer a safe place for them to interact and having mentors available to guide them through structured activities. While sociological theorists such as Shaw and McKay (1969) recognized that delinquency is reduced in environments where social bonds and relationship-building are positively developed, Mann and Reynolds (2006), Chung & Steinberg (2006), Feinberg, Riggs & Greenberg (2005), Fagan (1987), all recognize that a comprehensive community approach that addresses several risk factors is the most beneficial approach for delinquency prevention.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The purpose of this case study was to explore staff perceptions of whether or not the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg prevents delinquency. In analyzing the data in light of the research questions, I was able to gather a better understanding of the processes an organization undertakes when implementing delinquency prevention programs. In this chapter, I illustrated how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg is structured to prevent delinquency, how the Club creates a culture aimed at preventing delinquent behavior, and how participants perceive staff and participant interactions as preventing delinquency. The next chapter summarizes key

findings from the research, expands on the significance of the study, and comments on directions for future research as well as program and policy development.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION

A qualitative analysis of the how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg prevents or reduces juvenile delinquency was conducted in this dissertation. I explored whether the programs at the Club have any influence on whether youth engage in delinquent behavior and how the staff perceive what they do to influence youth. I also explored the techniques and strategies at the Club that were most successful in preventing delinquent behavior. I also analyzed the impact the programs have on the lives of the youth who participate. Additionally, I studied whether youth engagement at the Club influences youth in their decision making to refrain from delinquency. To explore these concepts, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 18 adult former members and current staff at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The methods for this research are described in chapter three, and my findings are described in chapter four.

In this chapter, I begin by re-stating the research questions; I then share findings on three levels. First, at the institutional level, the Club offers effective program approaches that provide career development and help guide youth towards productive opportunities such as gainful employment and furthering their education. Second, the Club's culture provides a safe and positive place for youth to gather and participate in programs that inspire civic engagement and creates a supportive ambiance for youth. Third, relationships and interactions between staff and youth are shown to be essential for building mentorship bonds that positively influence youth by helping youth develop favorable characteristics, positive attitudes, and quality traits that promote success. Lastly, I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study, along with the significance of this study and policy implications, and recommendations for future research for youth delinquency prevention programs in the central Pennsylvania region.

The overall research question for this study was:

In what ways do staff and former participants of the Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club perceive their experience and program outcomes as preventing and reducing delinquency among participating youth?

I answered the research question and sub questions using data from 18 semi-structured interviews with former members and current staff at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. I also used secondary data resources to answer the research question such as the 2014 National Outcomes Survey and the Formula for Impact. The qualitative data were organized, coded, and analyzed to reveal the findings which illustrate how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg as an organization is structured to prevent delinquency. The culture of the organization was also analyzed to understand how the Club programs prevent delinquency, and how collective efforts by Club staff converge to deter delinquent behavior among participating youth.

Delinquency Prevention at the Institutional Level

The structure of the organization helps to prevent delinquency. Theories pertaining to social structure such as strain theory and differential opportunity theory are addressed by the programs at the Boys and Girls Club. Programs offered to youth utilized established effective approaches including character development, academic support, and supportive mentorship to help youth overcome some of the barriers often faced by youth who could otherwise be described as experiencing strain or hardships due to a lack of resources (Agnew, 1992; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Hirschi, 2002). Staff worked to deliver programs that help guide youth towards productive opportunities such as gainful employment and furthering their education. Both staff and former members stressed that educational success is essential for all youth regardless of their aspirations.

Graduating from high school is the initial goal, and higher education, regardless of the path, career, or attainment level is the ultimate goal stressed to all youth. The SMART Girls, Passport to Manhood, Powerhour, Keystone, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate are programs that help youth to succeed. Sports, recreational activities, community volunteering, and social activities helped youth build confidence, teamwork, and cohesiveness, all of which staff and former members viewed as contributing elements that help youth refrain from delinquency. These efforts collectively promote new and realistic opportunities for youth, reducing the likelihood that differential opportunities will deter them from achieving their goals as described by criminological theorists as causing hardships or barriers to success (Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, Hirschi, 2002).

The former members and staff are realistic in recognizing that many variables can sway a child toward delinquency. A common sentiment shared by former members and staff, however, was the importance of positive mentoring relationships as a necessary element which created a positive impact of their behavior. Interviewees illustrated how the Club is creating opportunities for youth to thrive, to continue on to higher education, and to seek decent employment. As a result of these efforts and programs offered, youth develop a realistic outlook on the possibilities for success and thus refrain from delinquency.

Programs were also structured to prevent delinquency. Former members and staff described the multifaceted approach of Club programs. They expressed that while the organization provides a structure for delinquency prevention, realistically external factors such as peer pressure from non-participating youth and personal conflicts may all affect a youth's decision to engage or refrain from delinquency. Nevertheless, former members shared a variety

of influences that swayed their decision to refrain from delinquency such as their relationship with their mentor or having productive activities to participate in such as sports.

The findings of this study support the tenants of the criminological theories discussed in this study such as social bonding theory. An example of how social bonding theory applies to the findings of this study is the manner in which the staff and former participants shared their experiences of how and why their experiences at the Club with mentors in a safe and structured environment with a variety of programs, activities, and positive influences helped them refrain from delinquency. The bonds created between staff and youth was described as being instrumental in encouraging and guiding youth to refrain from delinquency. This study adds to the body of literature on criminological theories that highlight the importance in removing negative influences or strains, creating opportunities and eliminating differential opportunities, and helping youth build social bonds through mentoring for the purpose of preventing or reducing delinquency among youth.

A Culture of Delinquency Prevention

The findings in this study support the theories discussed in this study, which suggest that where risk factors such as a lack of family support, educational development, and exposure to violence are present, youth are more likely to engage in delinquency. The culture and ambiance created at the Club specifically addresses risk factors in many ways. First, having responsible adults serving a familial role present and actively engaged with youth reduces or eliminates that family risk factor while youth are at the Club. Next, daily educational support as soon as youth arrive at the Club is valued by youth who would otherwise be on their own to complete their schoolwork. Communications are also frequent between Club staff and teachers for participants. In addition, exposure to violence in the community is diminished by youth being at the Club.

Additionally, routine activities theory, which explains that a person is more prone to oblige into crime without supervision also is addressed in the findings of the study (Cohen & Felson, 1979). New routines offered in the form of programs and mentor relationships through the Club culture and/or ambiance are a means of forming new routines or habits for youth to adapt to are a means of developing new habits and learned behaviors. The findings in this study clearly illustrate a nexus between the Club culture and the decision for youth not to engage in delinquent behavior. The National Youth Outcomes Survey (2014) offers further support for these findings.

According to the National Youth Outcomes Survey (2014), offering youth a safe and positive place is critical to their positive development. The Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club staff expressed that creating an ambiance of safety for the youth and an environment where they are safe from violence and crime is an underlying necessity. Staff stated that when youth feel safe, these children take advantage of opportunities and are more amenable to engaging in programs and activities. According to club staff and former members, the components for a safe and positive place for youth to gather were two-fold and included physical security and emotional safety. Furthermore, the Club ensured physical security by providing security checks with clerks that checked for identification for all visitors at all entrances and by requiring proper clearances and screenings from all adults having any contact with the youth. Staff convey emotional safety through the tone and nature of the relationships with staff acknowledging youth by greeting them, engaging in conversations, and mentoring youth daily through programs and activities.

Moreover, former members affectionately described the Club as "a place to get youth off the streets" and an alternative from getting in trouble in the streets. Former members and staff recognized that safety encompasses insulation from violence, crime, and drugs which youth who attend the Club would otherwise encounter outside of the Club. Safety from violence and crime

is achieved at the Club by the strict and consistent rules enforced by staff, including a zero tolerance for fighting, criminal activity, or disorderly behavior. Former members stated that rules and expectations were instilled in them by staff who enforced rules consistently and equitably. Additionally, staff are required to submit to a urinalysis drug test, criminal history, and child abuse clearance checks which protected youth. The totality of all of these efforts creates a safe environment in which youth can thrive.

Structured activities that build emotional connections between youth, staff, and mentors helped to achieve emotional safety. Some of these activities include the powerhour, recreational games and activities, sports and team building activities, and programs such as Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, and Inspiring Teens to Graduate. The Executive Director stated that "teaching our children that no one can take their education away is the key for their success." The Executive Director and staff expressed that building self-esteem is valuable in developing emotional safety.

The intent to isolate the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg from physical and safety risks is surely conveyed by Club staff through their good intentions. The potential detrimental effects of some of these methods, however, lead to some of the problems that contribute to the failure of some of the youth that seek help from the Club. For example, youth who engage in behavior that is described as undesirable by the Executive Director (such as fighting, not participating in organized Club activities, using foul language at the Club, or a poor attitude) are all just cause to be expelled from the Club. Furthermore, youth that are expelled are rarely given a second chance to reapply for membership at the Club. The Executive Director noted that "bad behavior is not tolerated, and those that don't comply will be asked to leave." The consensus among staff was agreeable on the policy for removing poorly behaved youth was justified.

Ironically, it seems that those youth that have a difficult time conforming to the Club rules should qualify for intensive encouragement with more concentrated attention. Since the values that are apparently lacking in the poorly behaved youth are the touchstone of the Club's programs, the exclusion of youth who need the most attention seems counter-intuitive. The practice of excluding poorly behaved youth suggests that the notion of developing, encouraging, and teaching youth to succeed is somewhat skewed since youth who comply are favored over those who do not.

Delinquency Prevention at the Interactional Level

Staff and former members identified mentoring youth and relationship building as among the most successful techniques and strategies in preventing delinquent behavior. Building positive self-esteem, reinforcing the importance of educational success, and developing self-confidence in youth were all factors that staff and the Executive Director mentioned as contributing to the emotional strength that youth need to be secure in themselves and their decisions. Former members, in particular, shared vivid accounts of how mentors helped them reflect on decisions, prepare for their future, and guide them. These explanations describe a clear example of the tenants of social bonding theory such as attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. Attachment is demonstrated through the relationships formed between members and their mentors through their interactions and exchanges in activities at the Club. Involvement where staff and former members engaged in Club group activities in programs and structured activities such as Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, and Inspiring Teens to graduate where structured activities were completed with mentors. Commitment was shown through community activities where members participated in senior citizen assistance programs, food pantries for the homeless, and career building programs where members dedicated time through their service and

work in programs that sought to help others in their communities. Lastly, belief was interwoven throughout regular interactions at the Club with members where the Club mission, values, goals, and culture were personified through mentors and staff who exemplified Club values through their actions.

For staff, adults who played a parental/familial role were perceived as improving the chances for success for the young people and providing a sense of normalcy and genuine feelings of care among the youth. Staff and former members overwhelmingly recognized that mentoring and positive role modeling were key to influencing youth to refrain from delinquency. While the substantive material conveyed in programs was valuable in its context, the true outcome measures were reflected in the relationships developed between staff and/or mentors and youth. The criminological theory that best helps in illustrating interaction and relationships between youth and others is Hirschi's (2002) social control or strain theory.

Strain theory helps to make sense of my findings because it notes that people with solid and enduring connections to their world and society as a whole (in the form of attachments, involvement, investment, and belief) are less likely to engage in deviance than persons who fail to establish bonds (Chriss, 2007; Hirschi, 1969). Strain theory is valuable in making a theoretical illustration of how and why relationships are valuable in deterring youth from engaging in delinquency (Chriss, 2007; Hirschi, 1969). While relationship-building is crucial for developing youth on an interactional level, a structural approach is also important since environmental factors also play a role in one's influences when considering delinquency prevention.

The literature review for this study suggests that youth are more likely to become productive and successful when they are offered protective factors such as safe surroundings,

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positive adult influences and support to mitigate or prevent risk factors such as exposure to violence, poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure and support, and barriers to opportunities (Brandt, 2006; Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986; Goldstein, et al.,2013; Greenwood, 2008; Herrenkohl, et al., Hoffman & Ireland, 2004; 2000; Jaffe & Baker, 1998; Lochner ,2004; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Mann & Reynolds, 2006; Maxfield and Widom, 1996; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Shader, 2000; Shaw & McKay, 1969; Siegel, 1998;Wallin,1996; Weatherburn & Lind, 2006; Worrall, 2004). Many participants talked of the presence of positive role models as opposed to negative influences along with models of acceptable behavior. Supporting this finding, Agnew's (1992) conceptualization of strain theory, recognizes the importance not only of explaining, but also of demonstrating positive behavior to minimize strain, thus diminishing a youth's desire to resort to commit criminal behavior. Agnew's (1992) micro level approach to strain theory explains that challenges and conflicts with a person at the socio-psychological level enhances the probability for deviant behavior when negative emotions emerge because of unpleasant social circumstances such as the failure to achieve as wealth or academic success.   Additionally, negative influences such as emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, being raised in a single parent home, divorce, and a lack of monetary wealth all increase the strains a person experiences and thus increases the likelihood for delinquency. Furthering support for this theory, a former member shared an experience with a memorable mentor. The former member stated:

> When I was a child, from what I can recall definitely, what was more, what I remember more than anything was the teacher of the program at the location. His name is Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee was a q dog, fraternal, frat brother, was very athletic, was very confident, was all the things in which quote unquote, a man should kind of be. I think he was a former army

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guy. You know so he was solid. And he was also very intelligent. So with him being

involved, I learned a lot of things from Mr. Lee just based on his mannerisms and

characteristics. And then he used his upbringing and experiences to influence the

direction of the program. So talking about sex, talking about drugs, talking about

violence, talking about respect, all those things he used personal experiences or creative

ideas that tried to get our attention. As you know our attentions is quite short when you're

younger. And those were creative ways in which he did that. So I remember a lot of

things from Mr. Lee directly versus quote, unquote chapters in a book. I couldn't recite

not one but I can tell you certain things that Mr. Lee taught or in a certain way that kind

of helped make sure I didn't go the other way.

These descriptions are clear examples of how a mentor influenced a participant to adopt

appropriate behavior by learning through the mentor's shared experiences. According to Agnew

(1992), these positive influences reduce strain and thus the likelihood that a youth will engage in

delinquency since having a mentor who offers positive influences counterbalances the negative

influences on the young person. Additionally, the mentor in this example used innovation and

creativity by illustrating his personal life experiences and the lessons he had learned (Merton,

1968; Siegel, 1998). The former member described how the shared experiences by the mentor

stayed with him and eventually influenced his own decision-making.

The staff recognized that role models, affection, and positive mannerisms were simply

lacking in many of the lives of the young Club members. The relationships and social bonding

between youth and staff clearly illustrate how connections created between staff and youth are

essential in affecting the young person's decision-making process (Hirschi, 1969, 2002). Staff

shared that something as simple as greeting a child with a hug and a compliment is one of many

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basic behaviors they intentionally exhibit to show youth that they care. Similarly, the former members shared examples of how they interpreted staff's behavior as caring through the daily hugs to taking the time to help them with homework and college preparations. The social bonds established through these connections and interactions between staff and youth is clearly an element in the young people's considerations for refraining from delinquency.

Before conducting my research, I considered mentoring to be relevant to the programs as a vehicle for presenting and offering examples of success and failure. I did not expect to find that mentors are an integral part of the Club and experiences shared by former members. The absence of strong social bonds creates a path to deviance (Hirschi, 1969, Longshore et Al., 2004). Hirschi (2002) explained that when a person does not nurture a social relationship to a person, community, or organization, he or she is more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The findings from this study provide clear support for the tenets of social bonding theory through statements by participants who described their relationships with mentors as a reason for not engaging in delinquency. Ranging in age from 18 to 62, former members reflected on relationships that they developed while attending the Club. While the value of these relationships, or bonds, varied in depth and quality, former members overwhelmingly described the relationships formed with their mentors as indispensable to their development.

Moreover, the commitment exemplified by staff works to mitigate risk factors such as negative familial interactions, poor education, aggressive behavior, lack of family structure and support, and exposure to violence and crime. Participants expressed that staff taught them "how to be a man," "everyday things on how to act in school and professionally," and "how to care of ourselves." Additionally, staff explained that they know the Club is a safe place for youth where they are provided food, help with their homework, and adult role models to guide through

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everyday challenges and accomplishments. These behaviors and outward demonstrations of care

contribute to the positive culture youth need to thrive and refrain from delinquency.

The literature describes the presence of positive role models along with explanations of

how to conduct oneself in a manner that is acceptable as a method to reduce or eliminate strain

(Agnew, 1992, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, Hoffman & Ireland, 2004). At the structural level, strain

theory holds that the frustrations or strain caused by the inability to attain wealth through

conventional means defined by society encourages delinquency (Merton, 1968; Siegel, 1998).

For this study, mentoring is a means to mitigate or eliminate strain by offering youth positive

influences along with tools to seek conventional avenues for success including educational

assistance, employment training, and access to resources for education and employment, thus

reducing the likelihood that a youth will engage in delinquency.

Limitations of the Study

My position as a police officer working in the Harrisburg area with an interest in

preventing juvenile delinquency gave me credibility in my interactions with staff and former

participants. I did not wear my police uniform or any clothing or items identifying myself as a

police officer during my interactions at the Club. During each interview, I provided each

participant with a brief biography of myself when I introduced myself and explained the purpose

of my study. To be honest with each participant, I revealed my job position and status as a

student. By doing so, I hoped to gain credibility both as a researcher and as an interested

community member who is deeply concerned about preventing juvenile delinquency in the

Harrisburg area.

While I viewed my experience as a strength, I did receive several challenging questions

from staff and former members who shared their passionate views about certain current events

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involving police shootings of black males across the country. In the weeks and months that I was conducting my interviews, tensions were high between minorities and police across the nation and in Harrisburg. My personal background as a Hispanic Black female helped to shed light from a different point of view during our informal conversations about police and minority relationships. I worry that my position as a police officer may have superseded my position as a researcher and may have influenced a respondent's honesty. This study also elicited a small sample of eighteen participants with only six respondents that were former members and not staff and four staff members that were not affiliated with the Club in their youth. Ideally, I would have preferred to have more participants who were former members and not staff members.

The sample size also highlighted the difficulty in duplicating this study under similar conditions. The staff in this study were cooperative and dedicated to their work at the Club. Locating similar employees that work at a youth Club would be challenging due to difficulties in similar environments where staff are often paid lower salaries while working extended hours in high stress conditions with challenging youth members. The former members also described positive experiences where they valued their relationships and exchanges at the Club. The settings of small groups in a small city where participation groups are smaller and more focused can influence the relationship dynamic between staff and youth since youth are receiving concentrated attention through their mentors and Club staff.

I also had difficulty gathering quantitative data and delinquency rates for the youth who participated in the Boys and Girls Club. Even though a wealth of data is gathered annually in the National Outcomes Survey, there is little data gathered among individual clubs and the youth within them. Data from the schools attended by Club youth and Dauphin County probation

offices regarding delinquency rates and relationships with the Boys and Girls Club may have

offered some insight on existing or previous efforts attempted to prevent or reduce delinquency.

Significance and Implications of the Study

This study identifies the elements that were effective at reducing or eliminating

delinquency according to staff and former members of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg.

The findings discussed in this study can offer a framework for future programs, development and

improvements of current programs, and ideas for organizations and schools to offer delinquency

prevention initiatives. The organization of the findings was divided into institutional, cultural,

and interactional sections, which offer three general areas to address delinquency prevention

measures within an organization or entity. In this study, the institutional measures of having a

welcome environment where youth feel comfortable, the cultural ambiance of a safe place to

interact with others, and the interactional relationships with mentors who encouraged youth

through their exchanges all contributed to delinquency mitigation efforts. Understanding how

each of these levels of interaction contributes to a youth's propensity to refrain from delinquency

is valuable because it offers a realistic scientific sample of data that can be used to develop,

improve, and/or create delinquency prevention programs to help youth prosper. The

identification of these three general areas offers an opportunity to address issues incrementally

where funding and resources may be sparse, thus creating an opportunity to address delinquency

in steps, stages, or comprehensively using the Boys and Girls Club design as a guide. The

following is an explanation of how the institutional, cultural, and interactional sections can be

used as a model for preventing delinquency.

The institutional level of analysis in this study reveals the program elements that should

exist in a program as foundational elements. These elements consist of a history statement and

mission statement, administrative guidance and decision-making, program approaches that are comprehensive and seek to maintain youth interest, and academic and career support. While these institutional elements were present at the Harrisburg Club, similar programs or organizations may not have the leadership or organization in place to facilitate these components. Any attempt at creating these elements by coordinating with other organizations, seeking pro bono non-profit organizational assistance, or duplicating existing organizational models are all ways of creating similar institutional plans that are functional for the purpose of delinquency prevention. The institutional elements present at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg are attainable for an organization or entity seeking to duplicate the setting by a variety of means. This study highlights how each of those elements were relevant and why they were necessary for staff and former members in the quest to reduce or eliminate delinquency. Similarly, the culture at the Club contributed to delinquency prevention efforts for staff and former members.

Delinquency prevention at the cultural level consisted of providing a safe and positive space for youth and character development through programs. Both staff and former members shared the value in feeling safe in a place that was free of crime, abuse, drugs and alcohol, and negative stimuli and influences. Sustaining a safe ambiance at the Club's physical space and staffing the Club with reputable staff that are properly vetted contributes to the culture of the Club by allowing staff and former members to have a safe place to interact without fear of harm. Future delinquency prevention programs should consider these cultural level elements when planning where programs will be held and when considering the staff that will participate with youth because having a favorable cultural setting contributed to staff and former member participation since their desire to participate at the Club was nurtured at the Club. Culture is important because it sets the tone and ambiance for the programs and contributes to consistent

participation and interactions between staff and youth. An adequate cultural setting allows for interactions between staff and former members to flourish.

The interactional level is an important element to consider because mentoring was the most dominant factor in delinquency prevention according to staff and former members. The bonds and relationships were key to delinquency prevention according to staff and former members. Program curriculum that included useful relevant material and activities helped to support mentoring relationships and staff/youth interactions. Additionally, staff commitment and engagement were also valuable considerations for deterring youth from engaging in delinquency. This study illustrates that including these elements in similar programs will likely lead to reduced delinquency rates because former members that actively participated at the Club with their mentors explained that these were the elements that kept them off the streets, engaged in Club programs, and out of trouble. The bonds formed among staff and members was described as most influential in reducing or eliminating delinquency for a variety of reasons including accountability to others, the security in knowing that someone cares, sharing of personal stories and exchanges, and having the opportunity to influence others. Creating opportunities for mentoring and sharing is something that can be incorporated into a variety of programs and activities by weaving mentorship opportunities into existing programs, starting volunteer opportunities, and networking within the community to create mentoring opportunities. The findings in this study illustrate the key components in reducing or eliminating delinquency according to staff and former members. These findings should be used in implicating changes in delinquency prevention practice and the development of policies moving forward.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

Practice

The Boys and Girls Club may benefit from working more closely with local school districts. Additionally, a closer relationship with the school districts would enable more specific data collection to monitor youth successes and/or failures. The Club should also work more closely with the county juvenile probation department to collect data and collaborate on developing delinquency prevention and recidivism programs.

Delinquency prevention programs in the Harrisburg area should expand their reach. Harrisburg is a large diverse city comprised of six municipalities that range from poor urban neighborhoods to wealthy suburban developments. The diversity of needs for youth within all of these municipalities is vast; a county wide effort for a Boys and Girls Club would require a range of services for all youth.

 I found that while the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg focused their efforts in the neighborhoods surrounding the Club in the City of Harrisburg, their target population is described as "the greater Harrisburg area." The greater Harrisburg area consists of Swatara Township, Susquehanna Township, Lower Paxton Township, Penbrook Borough, and Steelton Borough. The demographic make-up of the surrounding townships consists of both urban and suburban neighborhoods with racially diverse populations. Youth from these townships and boroughs were not represented at the Club since most of the youth were City of Harrisburg residents. Additionally, Club services and activities were not offered in any of the surrounding townships or boroughs. As a whole, inclusiveness and broader availability would be a benefit for youth in the greater Harrisburg area, but it may not be financially feasible for the Boys and Girls Club to expand their range.

Harrisburg area youth programs might also consider streamlining efforts and sharing resources, especially in the area of training and development for staff. A genuine collaborative effort would consist of an evaluative review of all program assets to determine what programs can be streamlined, expanded, or developed further. Club staff were frustrated with fellow staff members who lacked work experience. Partnering with existing youth programs that may have professionally trained staff could offer a low cost alternative to hiring professionally certified trainers. Additionally, staff from other programs can be shared between partnering organizations and the Club to provide additional support to Club youth.

Sharing and partnering with organizations can be accomplished through the use of cultural capital. The Harrisburg Boys and Girls Club Director and Executive Director were instrumental in utilizing their resources for an array of uses. By using their personal connections in former places of employment such as school districts, businesses such as banks, retail stores, and restaurant owners, the staff made connections to gather monetary donations, volunteers for speaking engagements, and instructors for programs such as Career Launch where basic banking practices were taught. The staff used their influences to obtain resources at little or no cost to the Club. Using cultural capital also offered local constituencies to see the value in volunteering by engaging with the youth at the Club, promote their organization or business, and perhaps gain business and/or support for their business or organization through exposure. Cultural capital was a common practice for the Club staff used for obtaining needed services at the Club and to help youth at the Club succeed. The use of cultural capital was also a good example for youth in showing youth how they can navigate through their world by building relationships within their community, networking and sharing, and creating exchanges of knowledge, services, and goods to accomplish tasks while developing professional contacts.

Policy

Since mentoring was the most prominent delinquency prevention tool provided by the Club, as conveyed by staff and former participants of the Club, future training efforts should cultivate the mentoring relationship into program models. Clubs can cultivate mentoring through volunteer training where potential mentors are paired with participants to foster mentoring opportunities. Training for mentors should evolve with the various needs sought by participants to encourage continued interest from participants throughout their tenure at the Club. Policymakers can incorporate the findings of this study into future planning efforts for Club development, funding for staff, and cost benefit analyses for overall prevention efforts for a more comprehensive consideration of resources and budgeting. A vested financial investment in mentoring may be more effective than funding efforts that are better served as community team efforts with collaborating organizations such as a career day. Exposure to careers through internships and similar efforts can be streamlined with assistance from the school district, religious organizations, and locally based corporations such as hospitals, financial institutions, or government agencies that already host free career days. By taking a comprehensive look at the current programs paralleled with the results of this study, policymakers should make a genuine attempt to focus on delinquency prevention using what this study proves works, which is mentoring. A simple mentoring program, rather than costly long-term programs such as career training, community development, and other ventures, is a more practical, cost effective, substantiated method to prevent delinquency.

Limitations

The limitations of this research included a small sample size of participants. There were only four participants that were not staff members. Having a larger number of former members

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that were not staff members would have been beneficial in gathering additional perspectives from former participants that are no longer affiliated with the Club as adults. Also lacking was the perspective of the youth who are currently participating in the Boys and Girls Club programs, which would be helpful in creating a comprehensive analysis. Due to time constraints, however, developing this portion of the research would not be practical.

Using interviews for this study was valuable because "we cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world" (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Preventing juvenile delinquency for at-risk and adjudicated youth is a comprehensive initiative that requires a concerted effort. Miao et al. (2011) recognize that of the many elements that constitute successful juvenile delinquency prevention programs, the manner in which services are conveyed is a unique trait that varies from program to program. As such, having an understanding of what the former members and staff of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg deem relevant for the programs offered may add to the body of knowledge relating to future program development in the Harrisburg region.

For the purpose of this study, I recognized the possibility of methodological difficulties involved with asking volunteers or part-time staff to participate in this study. Some of these issues may be a lack of experience with programs, a lack of training for the programs, and little time spent working with youth. To mitigate these potential problems, I decided to solicit full-time paid employees and previous adult members on a volunteer basis. It should also be noted that self-selection bias may also be an issue, which had the potential to cause bias because employees and previous members decided to participate or not. Employees that decided to participate may also be biased in that their opinions of the Club. Some of these biases may consist of: 1) a favorable outlook of the Club as a whole since they work at the Club and may

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have a positive outlook of the Club as a result of their everyday interactions there; 2) staff members may also be committed to their employer, and through their loyalty they may express only positive feedback since they are employed by the Club; and 3) staff dedication to the youth at the Club, and personal experiences with the Club, may also pose a limitation since staff may feel obligated to share positive insights that may benefit the youth at the Club.

Arguably, another flaw in this analysis lies in the observation that misbehaving youth who fail to comply with Club rules and expectations are not welcomed at the Club due to the Executive Directors' zero tolerance policy on misbehavior. Some examples of the unacceptable behaviors include: failing to participate in Club activities, verbal or physical fighting, and non-compliance with staff and/or mentors. Since the better-behaved youth with the motivation to comply to rules and guidelines set forth by the Club's Executive Director are the majority of the Club population, one could argue that the remaining youth are more driven by their own desire to do well and thus are less likely to engage in delinquency. As such, the youth who frequently participate in programs and comply with rules are already prone to refrain from delinquency by their very nature and willingness to be amenable with the Club rules. This study cannot conclusively answer whether the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg reduces delinquency since youth self-select into and out of programs. This study can only describe what staff and former participants perceive as being effective to that end.

Conclusions

This study qualitatively examined how the staff and former participants of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. While structured program models and strategic plans create guidelines, the people behind the programs hold the knowledge of how and why programs may or may not work (Miao et al., 2011; Patton, 2002).

Greenwood (2008) recognized that juvenile delinquency left unattended eventually leads to a

burden on society, which is preventable through mitigation programs for juvenile offenders (p.

186). The positive impacts of preventative programs within the community include higher high

school graduation rates, development of youth, delinquency prevention, and community building

(Greenwood, 2008, p. 186). Collective community efforts are a valuable addition to the

community as a whole (Greenwood, 2008; Welsh & Farrington, 2000). Programs such as those

at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg create a positive environment in the Harrisburg

community as they seek to prevent juvenile delinquency. Current juvenile delinquency efforts

are centered on juvenile probation community programs that help youth integrate into their

communities while they are on probation after he or she has been arrested. This study clearly

demonstrates how and why programs such as Boys and Girls Club programs prevent delinquency

by mentoring, informing, and guiding youth through their adolescent years. As such, future

delinquency efforts should focus on prevention instead of rehabilitation to prevent youth from

entering the criminal justice system.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email Invitation

Email: Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Francia Henry, I am a PhD student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am conducting a research project on the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg and I would like your help in learning more about how the Club works to prevent juvenile delinquency. During this study you would be asked to participate in an 30-60 minute interview at the Boys and Girls Club to describe your experiences at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The purpose of the study to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. If you are interested in participating in my study, please contact me, Francia Henry at spfs@iup.edu or 973-670-1919.

Thank you for your time.

Francia Henry spfs@iup.edu Phone: 973-670-1919

Dr. Melissa Swauger melissa.swauger@iup.edu Phone: 717-720-4066

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the protection of Human Subjects (Phone Number 724-357-7730)

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer

Flyer: This general information flyer was attached to an email and posted on message boards,

tables in the lobbies of the Club site, and other places within the organization where employees

can easily see the flyer.

Are you interested in participating in a voluntary study about the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg?

WHO: Boys and Girls Club Staff Members over 18 who work or have worked in the Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club and Inspiring Teens to Graduate Programs AND Previous Boys and Girls Club Members over 18 who previously participated in the Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club and Inspiring Teens to Graduate Programs. During this study you will be asked to participate in an interview to describe your experiences at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The purpose of the study to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experience and program outcomes.

WHAT: Interviews lasting 30-60 minutes to learn more about Boys and Girls Club programs

WHEN: NOVEMBER 15-January 15, 2016(snacks and beverages will be provided during the interview)

WHERE: Conference Room or Meeting Room in any of the B and G club locations

WHY: I would like to learn more about Boys and Girls Club Programs and how the programs help to prevent juvenile delinquency.

If you are interested in participating in this study please contact:

Francia Doñe Henry (student researcher)spfs@iup.edu
Phone: 973-670-1919
Dr. Melissa Swauger (IUP Sociology Department) melissa.swauger@iup.edu
Phone: 717-720-4066
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form
(To be printed on Sociology Department Letterhead)

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you are a paid employee or former participant of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg aged 18 or over.

During this study you will be asked to participate in an interview to describe your experiences at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The purpose of the study to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experiences and program outcomes.

Participation in this study will require an interview with the researcher that will last between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Light refreshments will be offered during the interview. You will be asked a series of structured and open-ended questions and your responses will be collected using a digital voice recorder. Your responses will be transcribed and then analyzed by the researcher. Finally, you will be allowed to review the record of your responses prior to submitting your interview to ensure they reflect your thoughts. If you wish to review the transcript please feel free to contact me via email a spfs@iup.edu or phone at 973-670-1919. There is no benefit for you to participate and the risk to participate in this study is minimal. In the event you would need assistance such as crisis intervention, counseling, victim's services, or other assistance a list of several agencies that offer assistance is available for you with phone numbers, addresses and contact information.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the researcher or your employer. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher who will be administering the interview. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your standing with the University or in the community. Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants.

To protect your identity, data will be reported using fictions names not individual names. Your true name will not be used throughout the recorded interview and will only be documented by the researcher and not shared. Your personal information will not be shared and your identity will only be known by the researcher.

The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are considered confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached _____

Best days and times to reach you _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____   _____

Date   Researcher's Signature

RESEARCHER:

Francia D. Done Henry

Melissa Swauger, Ph.D.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Administration & Leadership Studies Doctoral Program

Dixon University Center – ALS-RTC

2986 North Second Street, Richards Hall 3rd Floor

Cell Phone: 973-670-1919

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix D

Interview Guide Questions for Staff Members

You were asked to voluntarily participate in this study because of your status as a full time employee, over 18 years of age at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. As a researcher, I am interested in knowing more about how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg serves at-risk and adjudicated youth to prevent juvenile delinquency. During this study you will be asked to participate in an interview to describe your experiences at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The purpose of the study to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. This interview will last about one hour and I will record our conversation with this recording device for clarity and data analysis for this study. I would like to refer to you as participant #___ during the interview so that your identity can be protected. I will document your identity in my notes, but your personal information will not be disclosed. A copy of this study will be offered to you at the completion of the study. Your participation is voluntary and does not affect your standing with the Boys and Girls Club. Your responses will be aggregated to protect your privacy and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Light refreshments will be offered during the interview. There are no benefits or incentives to participate in the study.

The risks to participate in this study are minimal but several resources including crisis intervention and victim witness assistance program information will be provided to you as a resource for assistance to you.

1. Describe what you do as part of your daily work tasks at the Boys and Girls Club?
2. Tell me what you do with the participants at the Club?

a. Describe what your experiences are like working with the youth at the Club?

3. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the youth programs at the Boys and Girls Club?

    a. How does that purpose affect (or not affect) the Harrisburg City community?

4. Why do you think youth engage in delinquent behavior?

5. Do you think the Boys and Girls Club programs address the needs of the youth that come here? Why or Why not?

6. In your opinion, does the Boys and Girls Club impact the juvenile delinquency rate in Harrisburg City? Why or Why not?

7. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Boys and Girls Club programs for the kids you serve?

8. Why do you have these programs?

9. How do the programs use other community resources?

    a. How do the programs work (or not work) with other community programs?

10. How does the Boys and Girls Club serve at-risk and adjudicated youth in the Harrisburg community?

11. Explain how the Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club or Inspiring Teens to Graduate programs influence delinquency prevention.

    a. How do these programs address risk factors?

    b. What types of problems do you typically address with the participants? Tell me about those experiences.

Appendix E

Interview Guide Questions for Former Members

You were asked to voluntarily participate in this study because of your status as a former participant of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. As a researcher, I am interested in knowing more about how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg serves at-risk and adjudicated youth to prevent juvenile delinquency. During this study you would be asked to participate in an interview to describe your experiences at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg. The purpose of the study to examine how the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg staff and former participants perceive the Club experience and program outcomes. This interview will last about 1 hour and I will record our conversation with this recording device for clarity and data analysis for this study. I would like to refer to you as participant #___ during the interview to protect your identify so that your identity can be protected. I will document your identity in my notes, but your personal information will not be disclosed. A copy of this study will be offered to you at the completion of the study. Your participation is voluntary and does not affect your standing with the Boys and Girls Club. Your responses will be aggregated to protect your privacy and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Light refreshments will be offered during the interview. There are no benefits or incentives to participate in the study.

The risks to participate in this study are minimal but several resources including crisis intervention and victim witness assistance program information will be provided to you as a resource for assistance to you.

How long did you participate with the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg?

a. When did you attend programs at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg? (i.e. date range, yearly, over the summer, weekends, etc.)

1. What programs did you participate in? Tell me what you did as a participant?

    a. Tell me how you contributed to the programs/activities at the Club?

    b. Did the programs contribute to your life? If so how? If not why?

2. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the youth programs at the Boys and Girls Club?

    a. How does that purpose affect (or not affect) the Harrisburg City community?

3. What is your understanding of why youth engage in delinquent behavior?

4. In your opinion, does the Boys and Girls Club impact the juvenile delinquency rate in Harrisburg City? Why or Why not?

5. Did your experiences from the _____ program influence your decision to engage or not engage in delinquency? Why/Why not?

6. What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Boys and Girls Club programs while you were a participant?

7. Did the programs you participated in use other community resources?

    a. How do the programs work (or not work) with other community programs?

8. How did the Boys and Girls Club serve at-risk and adjudicated youth in the Harrisburg community while you were a participant?

9. Do you participate in the Passport to Manhood, SMART Girls, Keystone Club or Inspiring Teens to Graduate?

a. What did you value most about the ____programs? Why?

b. What was most/least influential about the _____program? Why?

Appendix F

Resources for Participants

The Dauphin County Victim Witness Services Offices offer many resources for victims
including counseling, protection from abuse order application assistance, financial assistance,
shelters, etc.

1. Victim Witness Services: Dauphin County
Dauphin County Courthouse
101 Market Street, 2nd floor,
Harrisburg, PA 17101
1-888-292-9611
arosenberry@dauphinc.org
www.victimwitness.org

2. Adult Victim Services Unit: 717-780-7080
Juvenile Victim Services Unit: 717-780-7077
Protection from Abuse Unit: 717-780-7077

3. "**SAFETY ALERT**" If you are in danger, call **911**, your local hotline, or the National
Domestic Violence Hotline at **(800) 799-7233**. http://www.weather.com/.

4. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency Victim Assistance Programs
Questions: call 800-233-2339 or 717-783-5153

5. Dauphin County	Victim/Witness Assistance Program	717-780-7075
	Victim/Witness Services	717-780-6767
	YWCA of Greater Harrisburg	717-238-7273
6. Cumberland County	Crime Victim Assistance Program	717-240-6220
	Domestic Violence Services	717-258-4249
	Victim Services of Cumberland	717-761-5599
7. Perry County	800-852-2102	
	800-654-1211	