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A Macro-Level Analysis of Divorce Rates and Juvenile Violent Crime and Drug Abuse in Virginia

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A MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF DIVORCE RATES AND JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIME AND DRUG ABUSE IN VIRGINIA

by

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ABSTRACT

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With one out of every two marriages statistically doomed to fail, we must ask ourselves: how does this affect children? This thesis examines the relationship between divorce rates in the 135 cities and counties in Virginia and rates of juvenile violent crime and drug abuse. Social disorganization, used as a main source of reference in this study, is helpful in understanding how divorce affects juveniles at the community level. Family disruption, due to parental divorce, supports the notion that there is less juvenile supervision in the home and in effect the community, which leads to juvenile delinquency.

The three different datasets were used to analyze statistics on rates of juvenile violent crime, drug abuse, and divorce are the Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics, Social Indicators Project (Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention 2005), and the 2000 Census. Regression models indicated that divorce was positively and significantly related to rates of juvenile violent crime and drug abuse at the bivariate level. Early detection of risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency could help initiate prevention programs. Recreational and after-school programs could provide juveniles with supervised activities and role models that inhibit the introduction of delinquent behaviors.

This thesis is dedicated to the two most important people in my life, my parents: Gabriele Conn and Jack Conn.

Thank you both for the never-ending support you have provided during my academic endeavors. I am forever grateful and fortunate that I have been given the opportunity to pursue my B.A. and M.A. degrees. Pursuing these degrees have provided immeasurable experiences and will promote my happiness in life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, juvenile delinquency is a concern and perhaps even a crisis in today's society. Although delinquency is caused by many factors, this study focuses on the impact of divorce rates on juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug abuse within the cities and counties of Virginia. Prior research shows that "more than 60% of all children born today will spend at least some time in a single parent household before reaching age eighteen" (Zinsmeister 1990:51). Fagan and Rector (2000) assert that each year, one million American children are subjected to the divorce of their parents. Both authors continued that half of all children born to parents, who are married, will experience parental divorce before they reach their eighteenth birthday (Fagan and Rector 2000).

The relationship between divorce rates and drug use and violent crime is vital to study because of the high divorce rate in this country. A brief on the 2000 Census Bureau statistics stated that 50% of current marriages will result in divorce (Kreider and Simmons 2003). Consequently, we can infer that out of the marriages that produce children and result in divorce, the number of children living in single family homes is alarming. William Corbitt (2000) sites multiple factors leading children to delinquent futures. He states, "in 1994, over four million American children lived in severely distressed homes or neighborhoods that contributed to violent tendencies among troubled teens" (Corbitt 2000:18).

Corbitt concludes that the increasing divorce rate over the past twenty or thirty

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This thesis follows the format requirements of *The American Sociological Review*.

years has many experts supporting the "broken home" theory. This theory suggests that a home lacking the presence of one adult, which is usually the father, contributes to behavioral changes in children resulting in juvenile delinquency. Research shows that juveniles from broken homes have higher rates of delinquency (Price and Kunz 2003). With the support of several studies conducted in various geographic regions in the United States to be further discussed in the next chapter, this thesis will explore the relationship between divorce rates in Virginia and their impact on violent crime and drug abuse in adolescents.

Previous studies reveal a relationship between divorce and delinquency. The three theories that will be discussed, social control, differential association, and social disorganization reflect in their own manner, the idea that divorce and delinquency are related. The relationship between divorce and delinquency further supports the investigation linking drug use and violent crime. Research on the relationship between drug use and violent crime is profound enough to spark the interest and attention to the current study. Many insightful studies have been conducted to see if a relationship exists between the drug use and violent crimes. Clayton and Tuchfeld (1982) suggest that drug users are more likely to be involved in violent crimes. Some researchers propose that certain drugs influence the commission of certain crimes (Wieczorek, Welte, and Abel 1990; Dawkins 1997). For example, Dawkins (1997) concluded that marijuana had the strongest effect on general trouble with police and gang fights. Wieczorek et al. (1990) also found that homicide offenders have a tendency to drink heavily before committing murder. It can be concluded that at some degree, drug use and violent crime are related.

This thesis is a macro level analysis that tests for a relationship between divorce rates in the 135 counties and cities in Virginia and the rates of juvenile violent crime and

juvenile drug abuse. The compelling research and argument that divorced or separated homes influence rates of juvenile delinquency has grounded the premise of this research. The review of literature to be discussed in the next chapter supports the continued investigation into the research question: to what extent, if any, do divorce rates influence the rates of juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug use?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the investigation of the following research question: To what extent, if any, do parental divorce rates influence rates of juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug use and abuse? At the individual level, children of divorced parents, on average, exhibit more behavioral and emotional problems and are involved more frequently in violent crime and drug abuse (Fagan and Rector 2000). High rates of parental divorce, drug use, and violent crime are alarming. The links between parental divorce and delinquency is a phenomenon I wish to further explore.

Divorced homes, also referred to as broken homes (Bushong 1926; Rankin 1983; Matsueda and Heimer 1987; Sampson 1993), martially disrupted families (Needle, Su, Doherty 1990), and family disruption (Sampson and Groves 1989) refer to the family structure that deviates from an ideal family structure defined by American society (Wilkinson 1974). This ideal structure is usually defined by the presence of two parents in the home. Divorce or separation can have an impact on more than just juvenile delinquency. It is a widely accepted premise that a child born into a home with a single parent is more likely to be impoverished and welfare dependent than those children born into an intact family (Fagan 1995). The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 70% of juveniles that were in a reform institution grew up in a single family or no-parent household (Zinsmeister 1990). The nature of a divorce is often associated with hostility, resentment and conflict (Wells and Rankin 1991).

The relationship between drug use and abuse and violent crime is one that has been widely researched. Andrew Resignato (2000) held that one of the major causes of

violent crime is drug use. In an effort to reduce violent crime, he suggests more policy implications to reduce drug use. Simonds and Kashani (1980), conducted a study on delinquent boys and showed that many of the boys reported taking drugs prior to committing violent acts to boost their courage. Marvin Dawkins (1997) examined the relationships between specific crimes and specific drugs or alcohol used in the commission of those crimes. His study revealed a significant relationship between alcohol use and fighting, serious injury to a victim, and vandalism. When testing drug use and crime, Dawkins found that the adolescents using marijuana were involved in general trouble with police, theft over $50.00, gang fights, the use of weapons in crimes, and petty theft from autos.

Marijuana use is generally thought to influence less serious crimes such as property offenses while harsher drugs such as cocaine or heroin are more generally associated with more violent crimes. Yu and Williford (1994) claim that adolescents who start using legal drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes at a young age are more likely to use illicit drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. They believe that this early lifestyle will eventually lead to the participation of illegal criminal activity, such as offenses against persons. Anglin and Speckart (1988) reported that heavy drug users are more likely to be involved in criminal activity of a violent nature. The idea that drug use and violent crime are related, justifies the interest and attention devoted to finding possible factors, such as divorce, that influence both of these crimes.

The social control, differential association, and social disorganization theories to be discussed in this chapter are empirically supported. The link between the theories and the issue of broken homes and juvenile delinquency has been researched for quite some time. Research indicates that interest and support for relationship between delinquency

and broken homes has gone through eras of rejection or ignorance (Wilkinson 1974). During the 1900's up to the 1930's considerable support for this relationship was established (Shaw and McKay 1932). From the late 1930's to the 50's, support diminished due to cultural and ideological conditions rather than scientific evidence (Wilkinson 1974). The 1970's through the 1990's to current day research shows a revival of interest, perhaps due to recent findings and research on the topic indicating that the effect of divorce on adolescents is vital to understand (Wilkinson 1974; Fagan and Rector 2000). The time periods of interest have been influenced by new data as well as new social theories.

In one of the earliest studies, Eugene Bushong (1926) introduced the phenomena and in effect the topic has been widely researched and currently the topic of interest for many urban sociologists. Although his research dates 80 years back, the importance of family factors on children remains the same. He concludes that the intact family is essential in teaching healthy personalities in children.

> The family performs a vital function in the social order, training the children and implanting the group mores and respect for the group institutions in their minds...when the family is broken in any way or rendered inefficient by estrangement it cannot properly perform these functions, and the result is apparent in the lives of the children. (Bushong 1926:83)

There are three specific theories that would suggest a link between divorced or separated homes and juvenile delinquency. The first two theories, social control and differential association, are micro level theories focusing on individual relationships. However, the third theory, social disorganization, is a macro level theory that will also be used to support the validity of this study. The factors associated with social disorganization will be tested in this thesis.

SOCIAL CONTROL THEORY

Hirschi (1969) suggests that people are dissuaded from committing crime when their social bonds are strong (Matsueda and Heimer 1987). Hirschi uses four types of bonds to support this notion: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in the moral order. The relationship between social control theory and the influence of divorce on juvenile delinquency is quite interesting. This theory suggests that divorce has an indirect relationship with juvenile delinquency as it impairs the four bonds to social control.

The attachment bond suggests that those individuals, who have close-knit relationships with family and friends, distance themselves from immoral or unlawful acts. Teens that have a close relationship to lawful behaving parents would be less likely to involve themselves in delinquent behavior. The commitment bond refers to a commitment to structures such as the family and the greater the commitment to the family, the less likely the person will jeopardize a relationship by committing a delinquent act. This bond suggests that commitment to an intact family decreases the likelihood that teens will risk trouble with the parents. Rosen (1970) posits that broken homes have an adverse effect on children because of role model deficiency, the lack of control with the child, and insufficient paternal love. The involvement bond contends that a person who is busy with conventional activities, for instance family attachment, will have less time to commit illegal acts. One could suggest that the involvement bond is of great importance because, without family structured activities, the teen could venture out and befriend delinquent peers who direct him in the wrong direction.

Hirschi and Selvin (1966) challenge the idea that juvenile delinquency is caused solely by the broken home; rather it is one of the effects stemming from an inadequate

home. This also relates to the history of studies involving the broken home and juvenile delinquency in the following way; early social scientists suggested that a broken home is the major cause of juvenile delinquency (Wilkinson 1974). Wilkinson (1974:514) further cites Shaw and McKay (1932) who asserted, "the broken home is one of the most important causes of juvenile delinquency." Today, we know that the cause of juvenile delinquency cannot be explained by just one factor, but divorce is still a likely factor.

One particular aspect of control theory significant to this study is the impact of parental divorce or separation on delinquency. The divorced or separated home should influence delinquency by negatively affecting strong attachment to parents, commitment to social institutions, involvement in conventional activities, and beliefs in the moral order. Each one of the components of the social control theory are said to affect juvenile delinquency "independently and additively" (Hirschi 1969:27).

In the study conducted by Matsueda and Heimer (1987) to test social control and differential association theories, results showed that the effects of age, broken home, and neighborhood trouble are directly related to the attachment to parents, delinquency, peers, and moral beliefs. The results illustrated how older teens from broken homes increased the likelihood that they would have less parental attachment and increased delinquent friends. Social control theory suggests that divorce weakens the bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and moral belief, which in turn promote the development of juvenile misbehavior.

Social control theory suggests that the four bonds are weakened when a juvenile is exposed to parental divorce or separation in the home. At the individual or micro level, bonds that are weak due to a parental divorce or separation influence juvenile delinquency. In an effort to explore a micro level analysis, one would conclude that this

micro level theory, social control, influences the rates of juvenile delinquency in this macro level study.

DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

Differential association theory suggests that people are organized into groups that are for or against delinquency (Matsueda and Heimer 1987). Sutherland's (1947) theory of differential association contends that delinquency is rooted in normative conflict. Normative conflict is translated into differential organization in the way that individuals learn definitions of crime and delinquency from their surrounding influences. Sutherland's differential association theory has been used to support a relationship between divorce or broken homes and juvenile delinquency. These influences can include neighborhood organization, family, peer relationship, as well as age, race, and class. Sutherland theorizes that the definitions "favorable and unfavorable to delinquent behavior are learned through communication, primarily in intimate groups" (Sutherland 1947 as cited in Matsueda and Heimer 1987:827). Whether the definition of these illegal or immoral acts has an influence or not depends on the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. That is to say, if a teen experiences a positive family, peer and neighborhood attachment consisting of role models and positive reinforced definitions frequently, the likelihood that they will engage in juvenile delinquency is lowered significantly.

Differential association suggests that people are organized in various groups and therefore are more likely to associate with like-minded groups in terms of their idea of what behavior is the norm. Teens that spend time with other teens that engage in delinquent behaviors are more likely to learn definitions of inappropriate behavior.

Juvenile delinquency then results from the adoption of pro-delinquent definitions that reflect normative behavior in that group.

Several things influence the learning of pro-delinquent definitions. If parents are separated or divorced, the teen with be more likely to spend time with peers and if those peers teach pro-delinquent attitudes and actions, the higher the chances are that the teen will engage in delinquent behaviors. The lack of attachment that may exist in a home where only one parent exists may also impede the education and influence of positive anti-delinquent definitions. This also relates back to the frequency factor. If there is only one parent in the home, the time and duration of the transmission to teach favorable and unfavorable definitions of crime becomes limited. The sources of learning are not just from the parents but also the community and social structure in which the teen's involved. If a teen's community has a negative impact on the learning of pro-delinquent attitudes and the social structure is not supportive of anti-illegal activity, then the teen is surely bound to involve themselves in a routine of delinquency.

Matsueda and Heimer (1987) conducted a study to test two theories: social control and differential association. Using Sutherland's theory of differential association, they posit that the structural variables such as group affiliation or broken homes contribute to the influence of learning definitions that may be favorable or unfavorable to crime. In an attempt to explain juvenile delinquency and race (blacks, non-blacks), Matsueda and Heimer found several interesting outcomes. In regards to race, black teens are more influenced by the broken home than non-blacks. In both racial groups, the existence of a broken home decreases supervision and increases the risk of companionship with delinquent peers. The total effect of broken homes is said to be larger for blacks than non-blacks because of the number of blacks from broken homes and troubled

neighborhoods. These two factors heightened the risk for learning an excess of pro-delinquent definitions and in-turn increasing juvenile delinquency. The findings from their study did support one hypothesis regarding social control theory, but for the most part, the study supported differential association as a factor significantly related to the increased juvenile delinquency. This study showed that "youth who are closely supervised and develop warm friendships commit fewer delinquent acts because they are exposed to fewer pro-delinquent definitions" (Matsueda and Heimer 1987:831). The two social scientists also reveal that the greater the number of delinquent friends, the greater the chances are that they will be exposed to pro-delinquent definitions.

The study shows a difference in support for the two theories; differential theory over social control theory. They differ from Hirschi's theory that each element of the social bond shows a "unique and substantial effect on delinquency" while they argue that the effects of attachment to parents and other peer groups influence the teen indirectly. Further, they reveal that the learning of favorable definitions of delinquency is the result of this indirect effect of attachment (Matsueda and Heimer 1987). They conclude in their study that delinquency was produced by broken homes, which leads to unsupervised teens, which leads to an influence of pro-delinquent definitions.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) posit the idea that adolescents coping with the normal challenges one faces during these critical years of growth and also a parents divorce will result in a complex psychological change. Similarly, Newcomb and Bentler (1988) related the development of deviant attitudes as an effect of a disrupted family. While many studies have focused on individual findings at one point in time, Needle et al. (1990) conducted a longitudinal study following children over a five year time frame and comparing three groups of children: those experiencing parental divorce during

childhood, those experiencing parental divorce during their adolescent years, and those from continuously married families. The results from their longitudinal study showed that the adolescent divorce group had the greatest overall drug involvement. Needle et al. (1990) suggest that the impact of divorce has a greater affect on adolescents than in children in the complex developmental process. Differential association theory would suggest that with the presence of divorce or separation, impressionable adolescents during this period of growth and learning are more susceptible to learning definitions favorable to delinquency. A micro-level theory, such as social control theory, differential association is used to show how the individual learning of pro-delinquency definitions influence the macro level rates of juvenile delinquency.

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Another theory of particular interest in relation to this thesis is social disorganization theory. Empirical research shows that numerous studies have used this theory in an effort to explain the relationship between community level factors including divorced, drug use, and violence. This is the third theory that will be used to investigate the research question: to what extent, if any, do divorce rates influence the rates of juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug use and abuse?

Social disorganization theory dates back to its originator, W.I.Thomas (Veysey and Messner 1999). In one of the first studies revealing social disorganization theory, Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) explained that it is a "decrease of the influence of existing social rules of behavior upon individual members of the group" (as cited in Veysey and Messner 1999:159). In the classic work of Shaw and McKay (1969), social disorganization theory was used to explain juvenile delinquency in Chicago

neighborhoods (Bursik 1999). Sampson and Groves (1989) cites Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory as the result of three structural factors: economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility. Shaw and McKay posited that it was difficult for those residents who lived in low-income neighborhoods to regulate the activities and behavior of juveniles (as cited in Sampson and Groves 1989). Bursik (1999) later questioned this assumption in his discussion of the systemic model of social disorganization.

Bursik (1999) contends that in the systemic model, rapid residential turnovers as well as population heterogeneity are the factors associated with decreased network structures and decreased sources of social control. In an effort to explain the structural relationships in a community, we can look at family disruption as a factor that may decrease forms of social control. Families disrupted due to parental divorce or separation support the notion that there is less juvenile supervision in the home and, in effect, the community, which leads to higher rates of juvenile delinquency.

Using the British Crime Survey in 1982, Sampson and Groves (1989) conducted a study of social disorganization theory. The study discusses the effects of family disruption on community-level disruption and social disorganization. They looked at family disruption, among other variables, as a component in the decrease of informal social controls at the community level (Sampson and Groves 1989). They assert that two-parent households offer more supervision and support for their own children as well as those children in the community. Sampson (1988:155) defines family "disruption" as "percent single-parent households; divorce rate." Sampson (1988:155) "showed that macro-level family disruption had large effects on both whites and blacks." In their study, Sampson and Groves (1989) hypothesized that community level disruption as a result of

macro level family disruption has a great effect on the occurrence of street-corner teenage peer groups. Those street-corner groups were expected to increases rates of crime and delinquency (Sampson and Groves 1989:781).

Another vital concept that demands introduction as it relates to social disorganization theory is the idea of social capital. Social capital was introduced in part by James Coleman. He argued, "the distinguishing feature of social capital lies in the structure of interpersonal relations" (Coleman 1988:98). He argued that human capital encompasses the skills and knowledge acquired by a person. Social capital, then, refers to the relations between people that create and facilitate action. Social capital theory then is related to social disorganization theory in a distinct manner.

> In a system involving parents and children, communities characterized by an extensive set of obligations, expectations, and social networks connecting the adults are better able to facilitate the control and supervision of children. (Sampson 1993:158)

This relationship consists of two-parents and their children. The idea is that two parents will have a better social network that also includes the responsibility of watching children who are not their own (Coleman 1990). This in fact allows the parents to exhibit and entail high stability and responsibility and engage in social networks that further promote positive relationships and an example of positive morals and role models. The theory suggests that single parents may be less able to form local networks that provide children with exposure to sanctions and norms found the local community.

A distinction between the individual level social capital and community level social capital exists. The individual level social capital includes the social controls provided by families such as monitoring and supervision while the community level social capital exhibits collective supervision and neighborhood monitoring. Sampson uses

these two levels of social capital to derive hypotheses in his study on family and community level influences on crime (Sampson 1993:159). Sampson argues that a weak social capital among adults with children causes ineffective child rearing and problematic child development. Social disorganization in a community prevents parents from connecting with other parents and children and in turn missing out on the opportunity to be influenced by positive social networks that inhibit the risk of delinquency in teens. Sampson further argues that the structure of the family's relationships to the community can be influenced positively or negatively. "Broken homes may facilitate crime by decreasing community networks of informal social control" (Sampson 1993:160). An example of an informal social control that would be negatively affected by high rates of community family disruption is: "questioning strangers, watching over other's property, assuming responsibility for supervision of youth activities, intervening in local disturbances" (Sampson 1993:160). If a neighborhood has a high divorce rate, then that gives more adolescents free time with other teens from broken homes. This promotes unsupervised leisure time and in turn increases juvenile delinquency.

It is one belief that, because schools and neighbors do not properly address the needs of youth in their more influential years, that they are to blame for juvenile delinquency. Because there is a lack of support from surrounding neighbors and schools, juveniles lack the guidance and role models that generally exist in an intact home.

> Empirically, the structural dimensions of community social disorganization can be measured in terms of the prevalence and interdependence of the social networks in a community-both informal (e.g., friendship ties) and formal (e.g., organizational participation) and in the span of collective supervision that the community directs toward local problems. (Sampson and Groves 1989:777)

In understanding social disorganization theory, it is imperative to equate the relationship it has with social capital and social controls in relationship to delinquency

and the broken home. Family disruption and informal social controls directly transmit effects on delinquent outcomes on individual teens and on the community-level adolescent collection. Neighborhoods characterized by high divorce rates lack informal social controls and result in influencing high rates of juvenile delinquency. Macro level theories suggest that separation and divorce lend some kids into juvenile delinquency.

The current research study hopes to utilize social disorganization theory, to address the research question: To what extent, if any, do parental divorce rates influence rates of juvenile violent crime rates and juvenile drug use and abuse? Prior research and studies have aided the field of interest in this topic. Sampson, Groves, and Bursik, to name a few, have inspired the renewed interest and premise that divorce rates affect juvenile delinquency.

In summary, the two micro level theories, social control and differential association are used to support the macro level theory, social disorganization. Micro-level theories are consistent with a macro-level analysis. Based on this review, it is important to control for variables derived from the theory of social disorganization. The variables that may affect juvenile drug use and violent crime are divorce, racial composition, population turnover, and poverty. The data and variables will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design that is being used to investigate whether rates of parental divorce influence the rates of juvenile drug and juvenile violent crime. This study consists of a macro level analysis of the variables. The research design to be discussed in this chapter will focus on the following information: a discussion of the data sources and the sample, variables of interest, the statistical method for data analysis, and the limitations of this study.

DATA SOURCES AND UNITS OF ANALYSIS

To investigate the research question, three secondary datasets will be analyzed. The sample consists of data from 135 counties and cities in Virginia. These data have been chosen because of the diverse demographics that exist in the state of Virginia. The data being used in this study were obtained from the following places: Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics, the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, and the United States Census Bureau. The data will be combined and used to see if a relationship exists among the variables. A review of related literature on this topic of study has inspired me to focus on the selected variables for further analysis.

Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics

The FBI's (2005) Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics website provides the public access to juvenile arrest statistics at a national, state, city, and county level. The data was obtained for this site from the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) within the

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and presents data from Virginia by county and city. The Easy Arrest to FBI Arrest Statistics data that will be used in this study were collected in the years 1998 thru 2002. The variables to be utilized from this data source are juvenile violent crime rates and the juvenile drug abuse violation rates during from 1998-2002.

Arrest rates for juvenile violent crime from 1998 thru 2002 and arrest rates for juvenile drug abuse from 1998 thru 2002 come from this data. The Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics site defines violent crime as: "murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault" (FBI 2005). They defined the drug abuse violations as the "state and/or local offenses relating to the unlawful possession, sale, use, growing, and manufacturing of narcotic (sic.) drugs" (2005). The following list of drugs is used to help define violations for juvenile drug abusers.

> Opium or cocaine and their derivatives (morphine, heroin, codeine), marijuana, synthetic narcotics (manufactured narcotics that can cause true addiction i.e. Demerol, methadone), and dangerous non-narcotic drugs such as barbiturates and Benzedrine. (FBI 2005)

The arrest rates are derived from arrest counts during the years 1998 thru 2002. In an effort to maximize reliability and uniformity, the years have been aggregated. Because the sizes of the cities and counties vary considerably, some having relatively small juvenile populations, arrest and intake rates are likely to be unstable from year to year especially in the smaller counties. To help correct this problem rates are averaged across year.

Governors Office for Substance Abuse Prevention

The Social Indicators Project (SIP), in association with the Governors Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (2005), also provided data to be used in this study. The

juvenile felony statistics pertaining to narcotics violations and crimes against persons in Virginia will be utilized from the SIP dataset. They will be compared to divorce rates in Virginia from the Census 2000 to test theories related to the effects of a divorced home. The variables illustrate the counts of narcotic or violent crime (crimes against person) offenses in the 135 counties and cities in Virginia for which the offense has occurred. The counts will be translated into rates and then compared to the Census 2000 divorce rate as well as the FBI violent crime and drug abuse arrest rates.

The Governors Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) program awards and administers federal grant funds that have been apportioned to Virginia via the State Incentive Grant Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration and the Governor's set-aside of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act funds which are allocated through the U.S. Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. GOSAP provides grants in an effort to provide statewide leadership and a sharing of all resources. GOSAP initiated the Social Indicators Project as an attempt to recognize those high-risk behaviors by children and adolescents that need to be addressed through prevention measures. GOSAP's main goal is to prevent juvenile crimes, drug abuse, and other at risk behaviors.

The Governors Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) website contains the remaining dependent variables: youth with intakes for felony narcotics offenses in 2002-2004 and youth intakes for felony "crime against persons" offenses in 2002-2004. As previously performed with the FBI arrest rates, the years will be combined in aggregate to produce a figure that represents each violation for all three years.

Intake is defined as the referral of a juvenile to the criminal justice system. An

intake officer reviews referrals sent by police, schools, businesses, parents, citizens, and psychiatrists. These sources must make a statement or complaint evidencing the crime by the juvenile. An intake officer then files a petition to the court or handles the case out of court. If there is no admission of guilt by the juvenile, the case is automatically sent to court. Juveniles with prior criminal history are also automatically sent to court (Virginia Beach Juvenile Court Services 2005). The rates to be used in this study involve felony intakes for narcotics and crimes against persons.

The 2000 Census

The third data source, the 2000 Census, will enable us to compare divorce rates and other control variables in Virginia to the violent crime rates and drug abuse violation statistics from the FBI data and felony narcotics offenses and crimes against person's violations from the SIP data.

Six dependent variables comprise the focus of this study. The primary independent variable is the divorce rate of the population in the 135 cities and counties in Virginia. The 2000 census defines divorce as the percent of the population aged 15 and older who are currently divorced or separated. In addition to the rate of divorce or percent divorced or separated, it is important to control for variables derived from social disorganization theory, the only macro level theory to discuss divorce and juvenile delinquency. In particular, I will control for: racial composition (percent black and percent Hispanic), percent urban, population turnover, and percent poverty. Percent black and percent Hispanic represent the percentage of either black or Hispanic residents in the city or country. Percent urban signifies the percentage of residents living in urban areas of a city or county. Population turnover is the percent of the population five years and

older living elsewhere five years prior. Percent poverty represents the percentage of people living under the poverty line. These control variables are commonly found in literature and prior studies on juvenile delinquency and divorce rates.

STATISTICAL METHOD FOR DATA ANALYSIS

A variety of statistical data analyses' will be used to investigate the relationship between divorce rates and its influences on certain forms of juvenile delinquency. The use of the data management and analysis program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), will allow for an exploration of the research variables and determine if parental divorce rates are related to juvenile rates of violent crime and drug abuse. Using descriptive statistics, bivariate and OLS multivariate regression analysis, I expect to find a relationship between the variables in this study. This study will focus on macro level relationships between the variables. In an effort to answer the research question thoroughly and ensure a comprehensive analysis of data, the data includes rates from the population in most cities and counties in Virginia. The results from these statistical outputs will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

LIMITATIONS

There are a small number of limitations in this study that are worthy of mentioning. To begin, the primary independent variable in this study, percent divorced or separated, is not a perfect measure. The census figure representing the divorce rate is void of the several other instances where a single family may exist. This study focuses on adolescents from homes where one parent is absent. The divorce variable in turn does not provide a measure for those children born into homes where the parents never legally

married yet romantically and physically are separated. Another limitation with this study involves the possible presence of an extended family that could curb the possible introduction to or involvement in delinquency by the adolescent. Although one parent may be absent, the extended family could provide the relationships necessary to fill the void. In the same sense, the last limitation explains that, not all intact families provide the relationship and deterrent capabilities necessary to curb a juvenile's involvement in delinquent behaviors.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results from the analysis will be presented in this chapter. There were several interesting findings that will be discussed. This chapter will be comprised of three sections; descriptive statistics, correlations, and a regression analysis.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The results from the descriptive statistics analysis are presented in Table 1. There are 96 counties and 39 cities for a combined number of 135 cities and counties in the state of Virginia.[1] The 2000 census provides data on the number of residents per city or country. The population ranges throughout the state with the smallest county, Highland County, having 2,536 residents and the largest county, Fairfax County, having 969,749 residents. Highland County also has the smallest number of adolescents aged 10-17 (N=516) and Fairfax County has the highest number of adolescents age 10-17 (N=256,599). The mean for adolescents aged 10-17 was 13577.12.

The divorce rate throughout Virginia varied with the lowest in Radford city (6.03%) and the highest in Roanoke City (17.79%). The mean divorce rate in Virginia for 2000 was 11.84%. Percent urban had a mean of 46.27%. Thirty cities or counties had a low of 0.00% urban and ten cities or counties had a high of 100%. Population turnover (mean = 42.05%) had the lowest rate of population turnover in Buchanan County (23.62%) and the highest rate was in the City of Williamsburg (72.01%). The percentage

[1] To make a distinction between county and city, another variable was created so that 0 represented counties and 1 represented cities. Upon looking at the variable, I noticed that it was highly correlated with percent urban (r = .81). Percent urban was chosen over the city/county variable because percent urban is more commonly found in the literature related to this study.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Sample

Variables	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Adolescents ages 10-17	135	13577.12	516.00	256599.00	27699.29
Divorce	135	11.84	6.03	17.79	2.11
Urban	135	46.27	0.00	100.00	40.82
Population Turnover	135	42.05	23.62	72.01	9.40
Blacks	135	19.43	0.08	78.30	16.98
Hispanics	135	2.40	0.04	18.59	3.27
Population in Poverty	135	12.15	2.75	31.35	5.92
Drug abuse rates	128	282.49	0.00	898.00	194.28
Violent crime arrest rates	128	132.74	0.00	589.00	115.57
Intake rates for drugs	135	60.80	0.00	495.64	70.69
Intake for violence rates	135	205.77	0.00	3719.60	339.32
Drug abuse rates (L)	128	5.25	0.00	6.80	1.23
Violent crime arrest rates (L)	128	4.37	0.00	6.38	1.35
Intakes for drugs rates (L)	135	3.55	0.00	6.21	1.33
Intake for violence rates (L)	135	4.84	0.00	8.22	1.21

L= Logged

of black residents (mean = 19.43%) was smallest in Highland County (0.08%) and greatest in the City of Petersburg (78.30%). The percentage of Hispanic residents (mean = 2.40) ranged from a low of 0.04 in Amelia County and a high of 18.59 in the City of Arlington. The population in poverty (mean= 12.15) ranged from a low of 2.75 in Loudoun County and a high of 31.35 in Radford City.

The drug abuse arrest rates from the Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics allowed for several interesting observations. The drug abuse arrest rates (mean = 282.49, S.D. = 194.28) ranged from 0 in some cities and counties, to 898. Seven counties or cities had no arrest rates available and are considered as missing data. Four counties had the lowest drug abuse arrest rate (0.00). The counties were Craig, Bath, Charles City, and King and Queen. Chesterfield County had the highest drug abuse rate with (898.00).

The violent crime arrest rate ranged from 0 to 589 (mean = 132.74, S.D. = 115.57). There were seven cities and counties that did not have violent crime arrest rates available and were left as missing. Seven counties had a low violent crime arrest rate of 0.00. They are Charles City County, Bath County, Buchanan County, Bland County, Highland County, and Grayson County. Lee County had the next lowest violent crime arrest rate with 7.60. The City of Williamsburg had the highest violent crime arrest rate with 589.00.

The GOSAP data that provided the intake rates for violent crime and drugs gave us a variety of useful statistics. The intake rates for drugs ranged from 0 to 495.64 (mean = 60.80, S.D. = 70.69). There were twelve counties and cities that had missing data which was recoded so that missing = 0. The county with the lowest intake rate was Nottoway County (8.83). The County with the highest drug intake rate was Fauquier County (495.64).

The intake rate for violent crime revealed a range of 0 to 3,719.60 (mean = 205.77, S.D. = 339.32). Five cities or counties (Craig, Sussex, Floyd, City of Fairfax, and Clifton Forge) did not have available data for this variable and were recoded to equal zero. The county with the next lowest intake rate for violent crime was Grayson County (9.01). The county with the highest intake rate was Surry County (3,719.60).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRUG ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Before examining the effect of divorce rates on violent and drug crimes, it is interesting to explore the relationship between drug crime and violent crimes at the city/county level. Prior research and theory suggest that drug use and abuse can lead to violent crime. Although these data cannot confirm this causal hypothesis, the data are consistent with such an interpretation. The correlation between drug abuse arrest rates and violent crimes is significant and positive (r= .516). The correlations between intakes for drug abuse and intakes for violent crimes against persons is also positive and statistically significant (r=.267).

BIVARIATE AND MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

At the bivariate level, the divorce rate was significant and positively related to each of the dependent variables (Table 2). Correlations ranged from 0.196 to 0.464. Several regression analyses, also in Table 2, were run to determine the absolute and relative contribution of several independent variables on each of the dependent variables. Linear regression identified which independent variables were more closely related to the dependent variables.

Table 2. Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Analysis

Drug Abuse Rates			Violent Rates			Intake Violence Rate			Intake Drug Rate		
Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta
Divorce	*0.222	0.082	Divorce	*0.464	*0.321	Divorce	*0.196	0.043	Divorce	*0.213	0.095
Urban		*0.446	Urban		0.155	Urban		0.089	Urban		0.161
Black		0.016	Black		*0.145	Black		*0.331	Black		0.156
Hispanic		-0.050	Hispanic		0.002	Hispanic		0.033	Hispanic		-0.103
Poverty		*-0.255	Poverty		0.058	Poverty		0.004	Poverty		0.000
Age 10-17		0.017	Age 10-17		-0.005	Age 10-17		-0.086	Age 10-17		-0.066
	$r^2 = .049$	$r^2 = .377$		$r^2 = .215$	$r^2 = .487$		$r^2 = .038$	$r^2 = .137$		$r^2 = .046$	$r^2 = .144$

* Significant at $p<.05$

The first analysis involved a linear regression between the dependent variable, drug abuse arrest rates, and the seven independent variables, divorce, urban, black, Hispanic, poverty, age 10-17, and population turnover. The bivariate model explains about 5% of the variance in drug abuse arrest rates. When we control for the remaining independent variables, 37.7% of the variance in drug abuse rates is explained. The only variables in this regression analysis that tested significant ($p < .05$) were urban (Beta =.446) and poverty (Beta = -.255). These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between drug abuse arrest rates and percent urban and that there is a negative relationship between living in poverty and drug abuse arrest rates.

The negative relationship between poverty and drug abuse arrest rates was interesting and was explored further. Upon viewing a scatter plot between the two variables, no outliers existed but the relationship appeared to be curvilinear. Drug abuse seemed to decline from 0% to 20% living in poverty and then the direction changed and increased with higher levels of poverty. The r-square for the linear relationship was .035, but it increased to .092 when a quadratic term was added to the model. This is more consistent with theories and prior research hypothesizing and documenting a positive relationship between poverty and crime. The second model tested for a possible linear relationship violent crime arrest rates and the seven independent variables. Forty-nine percent of the variance is explained by controlling for the independent variables. In the bivariate model, 22% of the variance is explained. When we control for the independent variables, the linear regression analysis indicates that divorce (Beta =.321), population turnover (Beta=.378), and black (Beta = .145) are all significant ($p < .05$). This indicates that divorce, population turnover and percent black are positively and significantly related to the dependent variable, violent crime arrest rate.

The third linear regression analysis tested for a relationship between the dependent variable, intake for drug offenses rate, and the seven dependent variables. The bivariate model explains about 4.6% of the variance when divorce ($p<.05$) is the only variable in the model. When controlling for all other independent variables, 14% of the variance is explained but percent urban, population turnover, percent Hispanic, percent living in poverty, and age 10-17, were unrelated to intake drug offense rates. Percent black was the only significant factor related to intake rates for drug offenses.

The fourth linear regression analysis involved the last dependent variable, intake for violent crime offense rates. The bivariate model explains about 3.8 % of the variance when divorce ($p< .05$) is the only variable in the model ($r = .196$). When controlling for all independent variables, 14% ($r = .370$) of the variance is explained and percent black (Beta = .331) was the only variable significantly ($p <.05$) related to rates of intakes for violent crime offenses. In sum, the effect of divorce is significant and positive at the bivariate level in all four regression models. In the multivariate model, divorce remains significant in only one regression model (violent crime arrest rates). Poverty (beta = -0.255) and Urban (beta = .446) are significant ($p < .05$) in the regression with drug abuse rates. In Table 2, you can see that the percent black is significant in the two violent crime models. Population turnover (beta = .378) was significantly related to violent crime arrest rates. Overall, these models do show that divorce is significantly related to the four dependent variables at least at the bivariate level. When other variables are added, the significant relationship diminishes in all but one of the regression models.

Further univariate analyses showed that each of the two intake variables and arrest rate variables were highly skewed. To reduce the skew, a natural log was taken for each variable: drug abuse arrest rates (skew = .854, s.e. = .214), logged drug abuse arrest

rates (skew = .-2.577, s.e. = .214), violent crime arrest rates (skew = 1.435, s.e. = .214), logged violent crime arrest rates (skew = -1.759, s.e. = .214), intake for drug abuse rates (skew = 3.382, s.e. = .209), logged intake for drug abuse rates (skew = -1.408, s.e. = .209), intake for violent crime (skew = 8.619 s.e. = .209), logged intake for violent crime (skew = .-2.224, s.e. = .209). All of the dependent variables were less skewed upon logging the variables except the logged violent crime arrest rate variable.

Regression analyses presented in Table 3, use the natural log and provide several interesting results. The divorce rate was significant and positively related to each of the dependent variables except the logged intake for drug abuse rates. Significant correlations in r ranged from 0.175 for logged drug abuse arrest rates to 0.372 for the logged violent crime arrest rate. The logged drug abuse arrest rates only had two significant ($p< .05$) predictors, divorce (Beta = .084) and percent urban (Beta = .284). Twenty-five percent of the variance in the logged drug abuse arrest rate is explained by the independent variables. The logged violent crime arrest rates also had two significant ($p<.05$) predictors, divorce (Beta = .281) and population turnover (beta = .486). Forty-one percent of the variance in the logged violent crime arrest rate is explained by the independent variables. The logged intake for drug abuse rates had only one significant relationship: population turnover (beta = .352) and 11% of the variance is explained after controlling for the independent variables. The percent black (beta = .262) was the only significant ($p<.05$) variable in the regression analysis for the logged intake for violent crime rate variable with only 17% of its variance explained by the independent variables. These regression analyses show that using the natural log for the dependent variables produces only two significant ($p<.05$) relationships with divorce (logged drug abuse arrest rates and logged violent crime arrest rates). Turnover was significant ($p<.05$) in

Table 3: Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Analysis Using Logged Dependent Variables.

Drug Abuse Rates Logged			Violent Rates Logged			Intake Violence Rate Logged			Intake Drug Rate Logged		
Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta	Variables	r	Beta
Divorce	*0.175	*0.084	Divorce	*0.372	*0.281	Divorce	0.237	*0.074	Divorce	0.115	0.089
Urban		*0.284	Urban		0.077	Urban		0.172	Urban		-0.004
Black		-0.003	Black		0.136	Black		*0.262	Black		0.084
Hispanic		-0.063	Hispanic		-0.078	Hispanic		-0.100	Hispanic		-0.158
Poverty		-0.152	Poverty		-0.086	Poverty		0.037	Poverty		-0.081
Age 10-17		0.014	Age 10-17		0.018	Age 10-17		-0.012	Age 10-17		0.032
Turnover		0.236	Turnover		*0.486	Turnover		0.131	Turnover		*0.352
	$r^2 = .031$	$r^2 = .244$		$r^2 = .139$	$r^2 = .408$		$r^2 = .056$	$r^2 = .177$		$r^2 = .013$	$r^2 = .108$

* Significant at $p<.05$

two logged variables, violent crime arrest rates and intake for drug abuse rates. In sum, logging the variables did reduce skewness, but only produced one additional significant relationship between divorce and crime at the multivariate level. The next chapter provides a discussion and final conclusion to this research study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis investigated the following research question: to what extent, if any, do divorce rates influence the rates of juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug use? The study yielded some very interesting and somewhat expected results. This chapter will discuss the relationship between the outcome of results and the relationship to the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two. Final thoughts and a conclusion will be presented to understand the findings and implications of this study.

The premise for this thesis was strongly supported by the theoretical framework. Social control, differential association, and social disorganization were used to predict a positive relationship between divorce rates and adolescent drug abuse and violent crime. The results are supportive of these three theories at least at the bivariate level and in some multivariate models. While social control and differential association are micro level theories used to explain individual relationships, social disorganization, a macro level theory, was used to explain a macro-level phenomenon.

It is important to discuss William Robinson's ecological fallacy theory in the context of the analysis of the findings in this thesis. Robinson (1950) suggests that we shouldn't make conclusions about individual relationships based on aggregate data. The city and county level data were compared to rates of divorce, violent crime, and drug abuse. Robinson would suggest that the relationship between divorce and juvenile violent crime and drug abuse at the individual level and further presumed to influence county/city level rates, would be dangerously inaccurate. It must therefore be understood, that the divorce rates and rates of juvenile drug abuse and violent crime were assessed for

possible significant relationships. Empirical research and the three theories previously discussed support the macro-level results and discussion presented here.

In the discussion of social control, four bonds were mentioned: involvement, attachment, commitment, and belief. Social scientists have used the social control theory to propose a causal relationship between parental divorce or separation and juvenile delinquency. Social control theory suggests that divorce weakens the bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and moral belief. Matsueda and Heimer's (1987) study on social control supported the idea that divorce causes less parental attachment and causes adolescents to involve themselves in delinquent activities. The results from the current study suggest that there is a significant relationship between divorce and drug use and violent crime. The percentage of divorce or separation in a community was significantly related to arrests for drug abuse and violent crime as well as the intake rates for drug use and violent crime.

Differential association suggests that a "person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law" (Sutherland and Cressey 1978:219). In the study conducted by Matsueda and Heimer (1987) to test for a relationship between juvenile delinquency and race, black teens were said to be more influenced by a broken home than non-black teens. In the regression analysis, percent black was significantly related to violent crime arrest rates and intakes for violent crimes. Also of importance and in relation to the Matsueda and Heimer (1987) study, is the correlation that they found between the influence of divorce on black teens and the fact that they lived in troubled neighborhoods. The regression analysis also showed that percent urban and percent poverty were significantly related to drug abuse rates. Population turnover was significantly related to arrest rates

for violent crime. These findings are consistent with research pertaining to the broken home theory stating that families with only one parent may have to reduce their standard of living which in turn causes some families to live in impoverished conditions (Binder, Bruce, and Geis 1988). Adolescents become susceptible in this environment and are likely to engage in delinquent behaviors such as drug abuse and violent crimes.

The longitudinal study testing differential association conducted by Needle et al. (1990) concluded that the adolescent group who experienced parental divorce during their teenage years were the most likely to engage in drug use. The study points out that these youth are very impressionable during this stage of growth in their life. When a divorced home exists, this allows for adolescents to spend more time with other friends who may in fact teach them pro-delinquent definitions. The current research study revealed that drug abuse arrest rates were significantly related to divorce as were the intake drug abuse rates. This suggests that the findings from this study are consistently related to prior research on this topic.

Of greatest overall influence and support for this study was the macro level theory, social disorganization. Social disorganization theory suggested that divorce could influence juvenile delinquency as it relates to the breakdown of influence with social rules upon groups such as youth. Sampson's (1993) study on social disorganization used the same measure of divorce as the current study. Both Sampson and this current study defined divorce as percent single family-households or divorce rate. Our findings were similar in the sense that Sampson also concluded that family disruption or divorce rates affect juveniles negatively in their influence to engage in delinquent behavior. Social disorganization appears to happen in neighborhoods and families where informal social controls are weakened. Interestingly, Shaw and McKay (1969 as cited in Bursik 1999)

recognized that residents of low-income neighborhoods were unlikely to be able to regulate the activities and behaviors of juveniles. The results from the current study first suggested that poverty had a negative effect on drug abuse arrest rates. However, upon further exploration, the data suggested that at higher levels of poverty, the level of poverty was positively related to drug abuse arrest rates. This is consistent with Shaw and McKay who said that communities *plagued* with poverty had higher levels of delinquency.

Bursik (1999) proposed that population turnover influenced a decrease in network structures and decreased social control. Coincidently, population turnover was significantly related to divorce at the univariate and bivariate level in the violent crime arrest rate regression model. Population turnover was also significantly related to the logged intake rate for drug abuse model. Sampson and Groves (1989) also contend that the relationships within the community are important to nurture in an effort to support juvenile supervision and help strengthen network structures. Clearly the violent crime arrest rates and logged intake rates for drug abuse are significantly affected by population turnover as well as divorce.

The results from this research study are consistent with the study by Hilton and Desrochers (2002) as well. Their study showed how divorce causes a strain on resources and parental pressure to raise a child alone. The lack of parental control negatively influences juvenile delinquency. As stated above, the relationship between poverty and drug abuse arrest rates were significant. Unfortunately, one characteristic of divorce entails one parent having to support a household with one income. Low-income conditions present an ugly environment for adolescents that ultimately lead them into a life of delinquency. Corbitt (2000:18) contends that, "socioeconomic factors such as

poverty, severe deprivation of necessities, divorce or separation of parents, and family separation may have a negative impact on impressionable youth and lead to violent tendencies."

Coleman (1988) introduced the idea of social capital, as discussed in Chapter II. Social capital is the relationship between people in a community that facilitates action. At the community level, social capital works to form local networks that engage in supervising the youth and the neighborhood in an effort to reduce crime. The divorce rate was significantly related to all four dependent variables. This would suggest that parental divorce or separation weakens the amount of supervision at the individual level and extends it to the community level as well. Cities and counties with high divorce rates are considered to be target areas where social capital is weakened. This negatively influences the supervision of adolescents which unfortunately leads to an abundance of free time with like-minded friends. Unsupervised leisure time is considered to be a by-product of divorce that can ultimately provide an adolescent and their friends opportunities to pursue delinquent behaviors. The community social networks are weakened when divorce rates are high because parents are less likely to have the time to watch their own children, much less someone else's.

Data in this thesis is consistent with each of the three theories. The significant relationships found between divorce and arrest and intake rates for drug abuse and violent crimes among juveniles indicate that these theories are of importance. Juvenile delinquency is a caused by many factors, but divorce and other variables such as population turnover, percent poverty, and percent urban have clearly shown a significant relationship.

Violent crime and drug use or abuse by juveniles is plaguing our nation. "In 1997,

one out of every six violent crime arrests (17%) involved a juvenile" (Snyder 1999:5). The FBI's UCR report, which also provided this study with data, claimed that in 1997, 2.8 million juveniles were arrested (Snyder 1999). Of those arrests, 123,000 were categorized under the violent crime index (murder, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault). While juvenile violent crime seems to be coming back down from its high in 1994, the rate in 1997 was still 49% higher than in 1988. Joseph Biden (1998) asserts that each year, approximately 3,000 juvenile's commit murder and over 100,000 other juveniles commit other serious violent felonies. Juvenile violent crime and drug abuse are matters of great importance. The use of illicit drugs among eighth graders increased from 11.3% in 1991 to 28.6% in 2001 (Everett, Chadwell, and McChesney 2002). McCurley and Snyder (2004) stated that since 1980, juvenile arrest rates have increased 36% for aggravated assault (crime against persons) and 64 percent for drug violations. If not helped, these adolescents will become adults and fall down a path of life destruction. After reviewing the prior research and reviewing the results and research discussed in this thesis, final thoughts and a conclusion will be presented next.

CONCLUSION

This thesis proposed initially proposed the following research question: To answer the research question; to what extent, if any, do divorce rates influence the rates of juvenile violent crime and juvenile drug use? The relationship between divorce and rates of juvenile violent crime and drug abuse were discovered to be significant. Other factors such as percent poverty, population turnover, percent black and percent urban also exposed significant relationships to particular juvenile offenses. This leads one to pose another question: what can be done?

Addressing juvenile crime and drug use has been a concern to parents, communities, schools, policy makers, and more. Joseph Biden (1998) believes that the federal government needs to initiate a more positive and effective plan to curb youth violence and drug use. An issue discussed by many concerned with juvenile delinquency is the population of youth being tried and convicted as adults and resulting in prison sentences as opposed to juvenile detention (Biden, 1998; Cannon and Beiser, 2004; Tucker 2005; Everett et al. 2002). Cannon and Beiser (2004) disclose that almost every state has laws making it easier to try kids as adults. Biden (1998:n.p.) suggests that most studies on trying juveniles in adult courts reveal the following, "juveniles tried as adults are more likely to be put on probation, to spend less time in prison, and to commit more crimes in the future than juveniles tried and sentenced in the juvenile system." Juveniles sent to adult courts and further into prison or jail admit that they often come out a better criminal. Miriam Tucker (2005) suggests that "get tough" programs don't help prevent teen violence. Tucker (2005) contends that these programs are counterproductive because they tend to amplify negative feelings and sentiments for having to undergo such treatments.

A successful intervention program for at-risk youth focuses attention on providing positive guidance and role models especially for those teens with only one parent at home. At risk teen risk is define by Resnick and Burt (1996:174) as

> The presence of negative antecedent conditions which create vulnerabilities, combined with the presence of specific negative behavior or experiences that are more likely to lead, in time, to problem behaviors that will have more serious long-term consequences.

Using that definition and having an understanding of prior research and literature, one can easily associate the effect and influence of divorce on a teen and the vulnerability for

them to become "at-risk". Several things can be done to help these "at-risk" adolescents, in the form of prevention and deterrence.

Programs across the country are being developed and currently implemented in an effort to curb crime. Recreational programs and services need to be designed around preventing deviant behavior among youth who are at-risk (Everett et al. 2002). As research has shown, poverty is significantly related to divorce rates and juvenile delinquency. One such program called Golden Apple, allows low-income children to go on field trips with role models and mentors (Everett et al. 2002). This enables those parents who cannot afford to send their children to school field trips, the opportunity to see places and experience things they otherwise would not be able to. This program is said to have "been successful in turning around the behavior of a countless number of students" (Everett et al. 2002:6).

As research has shown, divorce often creates a lack of supervision among children. This often leads to unsupervised leisure time which ultimately creates a scene for delinquency. After-school and weekend recreational programs provide teens with a supervised, safe place to spend their time. These programs weaken the chances that teens will end up on street corners engaged in delinquent acts. Differential association theory would suggest that positive influences and experiences with such recreational after-school or weekend programs would positively influence the learning of anti-delinquent definitions and therefore reduce juvenile delinquency.

Corbitt (2000) suggest that early intervention and progressive crime prevention strategies are vital in reducing juvenile delinquency. It is imperative that schools intervene when necessary and help recognize troubled teenagers. Through education and training, school administrators and teachers can learn how to identify students who may

be in desperate need of intervention. A teacher's involvement and guidance could help strengthen a teens social control bonds and therefore weaken the influence of delinquency around them.

Communities need to come together and develop crime prevention initiatives and encourage community involvement. The core idea behind social disorganization is the lack of social structure within a community. When the community works together to supervise, mentor, and support teens, a much greater and successful outcome can be expected. One specific program developed by Richard Catalano and David Hawkins, The Communities That Care Program, developed to assess and predict risk and protective factors of at-risk teens in order to provide the necessary attention for the prevention of future drug abuse and delinquency (Hawkins and Catalano 2002). Cities, counties, schools, and communities in the United States are using this to learn about the incidence and prevalence of adolescent behaviors problems and the environmental factors that cause children to become at-risk. Research has shown how divorce is significantly related to juvenile delinquency. With programs such as Communities that Care, early prevention strategies can help reduce the impact that environmental factors have on a teen's development of negative behaviors.

Divorce, a factor influencing juvenile rates of drug abuse and violent crime is clearly a concern in today's society. This thesis has confirmed a significant relationship between supporting theories and the statistical findings as they relate to juvenile violent crime, drug abuse, and divorce. Preventative measures and community involvement can help as long as everyone participates in this epidemic of crime. Further research should be done to reveal the specific types of crimes being committed by specific kinds of drug users. This would allow for a better understanding of which specific drugs and crime are

prevalent among adolescents living in single parent homes. Again, predicting risk factors involved with parental divorce could help ensure preventative actions are taken.

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