Introduction to "Juvenile Delinquency and Justice"

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The 21st century juvenile system is faced with a myriad of challenges related to juvenile delinquency and justice from the individual youth to societal responses it seems the problems are not reduced by the system but are often exacerbated. In this special issue we seek to provide a platform for scholars, academicians, and researchers to share the contemporary thoughts in the fields of juvenile justice and delinquency for the purpose of promoting understanding of and solutions to the problems we see.

We open this edition with "The Impact of Trusted Adults and Friends on Fear and Avoidance Behaviours at School," where May *et al.*, use data from 447 public high school students in South-eastern United States to explore that relationship. Results indicate that youth who had a trusted adult at school were less fearful than their counterparts, while having a trusted friend did not affect either fear of crime or avoidance behaviors. Youth who had been victims of bullying were both significantly more fearful of victimization and were significantly more likely to engage in avoidance behaviors. The findings presented here support and compliment previous studies in this area that highlight the relevance of school climate, social bonding, and the development of social capital and self-efficacy in the development of safe schools. This emerging body of research has reduced the calls for target hardening approaches such as security guards, school police, and metal detectors, all of which have demonstrated at least some impact on increased levels of fear and avoidance in schools.

Next, Street trading and juvenile delinquency: Evidence from major motor parks in Enugu State, Nigeria, Eze, examines street trading and juvenile delinquency drawing on in-depth interviews of thirty juveniles aged 13-17 across six major motor parks in Enugu state, Nigeria. Findings show that juveniles engage in street trading to alleviate extreme poverty and are further exposed to criminal elements that endanger them physically, emotionally, and socially and put them at risk for deepening criminal adult behavior. These findings have important policy implications. Specifically, this research shows that State authorities need to step-up actions to address this poverty

gully across social strata, as a tool to ameliorate juvenile delinquency associated with street trading.

Next, in "Perceived Barriers to Treatment Initiation Amongst Justice-Involved Youth and Their Caregivers," Joseph, *et al.*, as part of the NIDA-funded Family Assessment, Motivation and Linkage Intervention grant project, collected deidentified data from youth and caregiver respondents at one juvenile justice probation department located in the southern United States. Results showed youth perceived a greater number of stressors competing with treatment, a greater number of issues with the relevance of treatment, and a greater number of treatment demands and issues as compared to their caregivers. Initiating substance use treatment, however, requires coordination between the youth and their caregiver to overcome personal, family, and systematic barriers interfering with treatment. This study highlights the need for family-focused interventions that work with youth and caregiver(s) to ensure those in need of treatment receive appropriate services.

May, *et al.*, in "Do School Resource Officers Really Refer Black Kids to the Juvenile Justice System for Lesser Offenses," used data from 2009-2011 obtained from the Administrative Office of the Courts' of 72,447 individual referrals made for 168 different juvenile offences, ranging from minor to serious to examine differences and similarities in referrals for both black and white juveniles. They also explored whether School Resource Officers (SROs) were more likely than others referral sources to refer black students to the juvenile justice system for minor offences. The findings presented here thus confirm those of previous studies using referral data. Schools play a more important role in shaping the school-to-prison pipeline than do SROs, although SROs are certainly not blameless in this regard. When using referral data including status offenses, SROs are more likely than schools to refer juveniles to the juvenile justice system for moderate and serious offenses and schools are much more likely to refer students for status offenses. Consequently, if schools were able to deal with truancy (the most frequently referred status offense for both black and white juveniles) by diverting them to programs other than the juvenile justice system, this would significantly reduce the number of youths involved in the juvenile justice system.

Next, Phellan, in "Understanding the Effects of Sexual Victimization on Substance Use Among American Indian Youth: Exploring the Moderating Effects of Cultural Identity," use a general strain theory (GST) framework, integrated with an indigenous stress-coping paradigm (ISCP), to examine the relationship between sexual assault and alcohol and marijuana use among a sample of American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth attending school on or near Indian reservations, using data from Drug Use Among Young American Indians: Epidemiology and Prediction, 1993-2006 and 2009-2013 of 26,451 youth and adolescents. Contrary to the theorized role of social supports

within GST and cultural identity within the ISCP, no evidence was found that AI/AN cultural identity conditions the relationship between sexual assault and alcohol and marijuana use in the last 30 days. These findings suggest that future research should also continue to contextualize and reiterate that the disparities present in too many AI/AN communities today are a result of the colonization process and not a result of inherent pathology or cultural inferiority. Whenever possible, researchers should engage in community based participatory research (CBPR) that views AI/AN communities and tribal governments as stakeholders and partners in the research process.

In "Gambling and Drug Use: An Analysis of Risky Behaviors Among Adolescents," Forsyth, Deshotels, Chen, and Bigger use the Louisiana Communities that Care Youth Survey (CCYS) (n=83,708) to test the relationship between adolescent gambling and drug use. Several types of gambling behaviors are examined including solitary gambling (poker machines, playing the lottery), group gambling (playing cards or dice for money), and internet gambling. Findings show a consistent relationship between gambling and substance use. Interestingly, contrary to expectations that the internet would be a prime vehicle for adolescent gambling and thus relation to drug use, it was face-to-face gambling that had the strongest correlation with drug use. This research also found, like previous research that boys were more likely to gamble than girls for all gambling behaviors, except for playing the lottery. Understanding these relationships is important. Adolescent gambling, and substance use and their cooccurrence are serious public health concerns. Indeed, gambling is seen by many to be a hidden problem in the illicit drug use community.

Ponce and Scott, in "A Comparison of Juvenile Misconduct in Residential Facilities in Florida by Gender," examine youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff misconduct from two male and two female high- to max-risk residential facilities in Florida using official disciplinary reports for 68 reported incidents from April 2017 to December 2020 to compare boys' and girls' misconduct. The results show disparities by gender for staff substantiated charges and staff use-of force. Male incidents resulted in more substantiated staff charges than females overall. Surprisingly, female incidents were more likely to result in use-of-force by staff, but charges of excessive use of force were more frequently dismissed in female facilities. The authors suggest that research needs to continue examining practices within juvenile institutions, but this research also needs to further delve into long-term effects of incarceration experiences on youth. Further, researchers and practitioners must continue to collaborate in advocating for these youth and their futures.

Next, Allen and Whitt, in "The Influence of Neighbourhood Characteristics on the Public's Confidence in the Police to protect Them from Crime" use data from the National Opinion Survey of Crime and Justice of 533 counties to examine respondents'

(n=803) confidence in the police to protect them from crime as it relates to the social and structural characteristics of their neighborhood. The results of the study show the combined impact of neighborhood conditions and personal experience on perceptions of police effectiveness. African Americans reported less trust in the police controlling for socioeconomic and contextual factors. In addition, living in areas with increasing neighborhood disorder led participants to report reduced confidence in the police's ability to protect them. This effect was significant both when disorder was measured as perceived crime and with actual crime rates; participants' views on law enforcement were consistent with their evaluation of threats to safety. This research helps explain the dynamics and interplay between police officers and people who reside in different communities where they patrol.

We close this issue with Scott and Hood's "Goals, Control, & Empowerment: A Comparison of Boy and Girl Ever Gang Involvement." This study utilizes the 2016 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) school survey data to compare the relationship between perceived stress, psychological empowerment, and goal orientation among male and female gang-involved youth. The results revealed significant difference in perceived level of stress between male and female ever gang involvement. This suggests that gangs have more of a lasting influence on gang-involved girl youth, which needs to be taken into consideration in the development of theories related to gang desistance, and the creation of specialized policies and programming. Treatment for former female gang members should focus more on stress reduction and coping mechanisms for handling stress, with the ultimate goal of reducing gang involvement, delinquency, and effectively helping girl gang members (both current and ever) to cope and function healthily in society. Specific goals can be decreasing re-offending and improving social, academic, and vocational skills.

In conclusion, the purpose of this special edition is to demonstrate the benefits and importance of analysing juvenile delinquency and justice in ways that can be useful for improving the outcomes for youth, their families, communities, and society.