

**Forecasting Success: Using the Texas Risk Assessment System to Predict Early Discharge
in a Large Sample of High, Moderate, and Low Risk Offenders**

A thesis submitted to the
Graduate School
of the University of Texas at Arlington
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
in the College of Liberal Arts

May 2020

by

Carley R. Shelton

B.A.A.S, The University of North Texas, 2016

Committee Chair: Michael F. TenEyck, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Robert L. Bing III, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Sarah A. El Sayed, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Little is known regarding predictive factors that contribute to adults successfully completing felony probation—particularly those who are granted early release. The current study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing data from a large, urban, community supervision and corrections department to examine what predictive factors—as identified by the Texas Risk Assessment System (TRAS) impact successful early release from adult felony probation. Results from multivariate logistic regression models revealed that the TRAS domains of criminal history and education/employment were significant predictors of early dismissal from felony community supervision as was the total TRAS risk score. Additionally, being male and Black significantly reduced the odds of early release from felony probation. The ability to capitalize on the areas leading to successful early release promotes greater efficacy in probation supervision strategies and alerts staff to areas where practitioners may have a direct effect on proper supervision techniques to enhance positive behavioral changes in the clients they serve.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank and without them, this thesis would not have been possible. First, I would like to thank my committee members – Dr. Michael F. TenEyck, Dr. Robert L. Bing III, and Dr. Sarah A. El Sayed – for their continued support and assistance throughout this endeavor. Your input and guidance improved this thesis and I have learned so much from each of you. Special thanks to Dr. Michael F. TenEyck for his mentorship throughout this process and overwhelming support. You have been a guiding influence for me during the entire graduate program and your understanding of academia and the research process will be an influence on the rest of my career. My passion for the field is immense and I consider myself fortunate to have a mentor with a matched enthusiasm for criminology. I have been able to develop as an academic, but even greater as a practitioner due to your guidance. I look forward to continuing to work with you as I pursue my doctoral degree. To my mom, Dianna, you have always provided unwavering support and none of this would have been possible without you by my side. I have and will always strive to make you proud. Andrew, thank you for always being rock and an encouraging voice despite my constant self-doubt. I continue to love you more every day and I truly appreciate you doing whatever it takes to ensure I can achieve my dreams. Finally, my genius Zoey. You are the reason I continue to pursue academics. I want you to always remember that we as people truly do not own a thing in this world, only our goals and our knowledge. I thank you for being a constant reminder to think critically and demand evidence. I cherish you with all my heart.

Burgeoning prison populations have made community supervision a favorable sentencing choice to many judiciaries. During the height of the war on drugs movement, probation agencies supervised approximately two-thirds of the convicted offender population—reflecting a serious problem with prison overcrowding (Petersilia, Turner, Kahan, & Peterson, 1985). According to Petersilia et. al (1985), probation is often the foremost alternative to incapacitation and solution to prison population reduction. Many states are now dealing with the impact of mass incarceration and seeking methods of “decarceration” (Barker, 2011). For example, as a result of the three-strikes rule and mandatory minimum sentencing, California’s criminal justice system was issued a federal court order to reduce the prison population by 25 percent, spend less, and imprison less individuals (Barker, 2011). As a result of this ruling and others, the stress of rehabilitation has shifted from penal institution to a new sanctioning venue: probation. The Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that in 2016 over 4.5 million adults were under community supervision nationwide and probation completions increased by nearly a million from 2015 to 2016 (Kaeble, 2018). Conversely, prison populations experienced a decline while individuals placed on probation accounted for the bulk of offenders under corrections supervision in 2016 (Kaeble & Cowhig, 2018). The aforementioned numbers indicate a need for further exploration into the areas that promote success in adult offenders as well as protective buffers against criminogenic tendencies.

The examination of offenders who have successfully completed community supervision is a vastly underrepresented aspect of criminal justice and criminology literature with research mainly focusing on juveniles, recidivism, and/or program efficacy (Henggeler, McCart, Cunningham, & Chapman, 2012; Lane, Turner, Fain & Sehgal, 2005). The prior literature supports variables such as offense history, age at first arrest, childhood abuse, and early onset of

substance use to be predictors of involvement with the juvenile justice system—although few studies examine how these elements affect the likelihood of adult criminality (Rhoades, Leve, Eddy, & Chamberlain, 2016). Research supports that dynamic factors are greater predictors of recidivism risk than static factors (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Connolly, 2003). As a result, identifying positive dynamic factors could potentially be markers of success in adult felony probationers. The ability to capitalize on the areas which may lead to successful early release promotes greater efficacy in probation supervision strategies and alerts staff to areas where practitioners may have a direct effect on proper supervision techniques to enhance positive behavioral changes.

There is a need for research focusing on adult felony probationers as most studies seek to define protective factors that reduce delinquency in adolescence, as many scholars who research adult probation focus solely on recidivism (e.g., Benedict & Huff-Corzine, 1997; Geerken & Hayes, 1993; Hyatt & Barnes 2017). Understanding revocation rates is important, but failure to examine success provides a one-sided view of the system at large. In short, assessment domains where a defendant scores as “low risk” could be utilized by probation officers as an opportunity to enhance other prosocial behaviors and/or offset areas where scores are higher through coaching and motivational interviewing. The current study analyzes data from a large, urban, community supervision and corrections department to locate predictive factors of *successful* early release from felony probation. Before discussing prior research on adult supervision and risk assessments, it is important to first discuss the theoretical foundations of community supervision and risk assessments.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

The dynamics that constitute the core concepts utilized in risk assessments are rooted in the foundations of numerous criminological theories. Each domain of the TRAS (i.e., criminal history, education, employment and financial situation, family and social support, neighborhood, substance use, peer associations, and criminal attitudes and behavioral patterns) is informed by certain theoretical insights and has been identified as a barrier that can preclude success based on empirical evidence. These theoretical underpinnings are used to assist in the explanation of delinquency and form consistent policies and procedures. Primarily, theory drives sanctions and incentives utilized by probation officers in hopes to promote successful completion from community supervision. The key theories identifying the sanctions and incentives utilized by probation officers in promoting successful completion from community supervision are social disorganization, social support, and social control.

Social Disorganization

Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory asserts that the community in which an individual resides has an impact on deviant behavior. Social disorganization theory (termed cultural deviance) identifies content of culture as a critical component that frames what is deemed by the individual as acceptable. The Texas Risk Assessment System references social disorganization questions in order to gauge an offender's perception of societal norms and the context of their views of criminogenic acceptability—which can be found in the domains of neighborhood, criminal attitudes, and behavioral patterns.

Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) argue that a neighborhood's ability, or lack thereof, to recognize a common set of values amongst one another either raises or lowers the ability to effectively assert social control. Results from the TRAS reflect that an individual who reports that crime is high, drugs are readily available, and/or they do not feel safe within the area

they reside are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of crime. Outside of directly asking probationers in the assessment process how they *perceive* their community, it is important to note that social disorganization affects the way an individual *perceives* other delinquent behaviors and attitudes.

Evidence has supported individuals who reside in certain environments may not recognize behaviors such as substance use as deviant (Beaver, Boutwell, & Barnes 2015). These behaviors may be condoned and even deemed as socially acceptable. Perception of neighborhood is important, particularly in the lives of probationers. Will and McGrath (1995), noted that socioeconomic status plays a significant role in the relationship between fear of crime and neighborhood perceptions indicating over 60 percent of respondents were afraid to walk outside at night and exhibited overall neighborhood fear. These findings were primarily among the lower income, minorities, and those who had recently experienced unemployment (Will & McGrath, 1995). These results indicate that certain offenders may also be apt to answer higher on assessment scales related to neighborhood based on personal perception.

It is important to control for the offender's perception of the neighborhood in which they reside as it potentially affects other variables such as delinquent peers, substance use, and criminal attitudes. Furthermore, individuals who reside in high-crime areas may be at greater risk for victimization. Berg, Stewart, Schreck, and Simons (2012) state this "victim-offender overlap" as one of the most constant findings in criminology literature. In another study, scholars identified violent offending increases the probability of violent victimization by 68 percent (Berg et. al, 2012). Additional findings support the idea that individuals labeled as "victim-offenders" score higher on risk factors associated with delinquency, such as low self-control (TenEyck & Barnes, 2018). Gillum (2019) suggests a community's condition has a

direct effect on crime rates that extends beyond individual occupants. For example, socioeconomic status may have a direct role in promoting a sense of control within a community, and perhaps even a correlation to biological health (Beaver et al., 2015). Evidence supports that victims share common risk factors. Thus, those who are victimized may retaliate (Anderson, 2000) and begin a victim/offender cycle.

Findings from studies examining neighborhood effects suggest social disadvantage within neighborhood constructs to be a consistent predictor of criminality (DuBois, Felner, Meares, & Krier, 1994). The TRAS utilizes foundations of this principle by assessing if the area is high crime/unsafe. Social disorganization does not solely explain criminal behavior, therefore, integrating multiple theoretical perspectives into probation casework activities, such as social support theory, may assist in reducing personal biases and build better rapport between officer and client.

Social Support Theory

Social support theory takes earlier theoretical framework from the Chicago School and expands upon certain aspects, most importantly that of support (Cullen, 1994). Cullen's social support theory reflects the need to account for the offender's *perceived* support level as it is reflective of the manner in which support is processed and experienced in a social context (Cullen, 1994; Matsueda 1992). Social support is defined as the provision of assistance to another person and can be transmitted informally through family and friends, as well as formally through education, government programs, and the criminal justice system. (Cullen, 1994). It can be informal referring to familial and social ties, or formal referring to conventional institutions. Much research has found an association between the level of social support and an individual's involvement in criminal activity (see Barrera & Li, 1996; Cullen & Wright, 1997; Thoits, 1995).

Informal social support contributes to healthy social bonds, typically from parents and friends, that facilitates prosocial attributes and ties to conventional norms. Cullen (1994) suggests that supportive parenting yields to prosocial learning and behaviors. Thus, positive informal social support in childhood yields to reduced criminality in adulthood as children are not exposed to criminal behaviors from parents, such as fighting, abuse, and harsh punishment (Cullen, 1994). Moreover, social support systems in adults reduce stressors, alleviate the effects of stressors, and promotes better coping mechanisms (Colvin, Cullen, & Ven, 2002). Ultimately, enhanced social support results in greater self-control which serves to mitigate against antisocial attitudes/behaviors and criminality (Cullen, 1994).

Formal social support through educational, occupational, and government means provides social order and enhances commitment (Cullen, 1994). Furthermore, formal social support provides the necessary means to obtain goals to live a quality life. Agnew (2007) asserts that increased social support promotes the ability to cope with stressors. The ability to cope through healthy means limits the probability of negative contact with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Since formal and informal support systems exist at varying degrees across society, it is important to recognize the value in the consistency of support. Thus, if support is not delivered in the appropriate manner, it may have a negative effect. As such, support can come from antisocial sources and may serve to actually promote antisocial activities and behaviors. For example, research indicates social support obtained from delinquent peers and loyalty to delinquent peers were statistically significant predictors of increased delinquency (Brezina & Azimi, 2018). Supportive influences can have both positive and/or negative impact on others however, it is of interest the degree to which the type of support has on criminal behaviors.

A review of social support on male inmates across multiple Korean prisons suggests social support is a significant factor in lowering recidivism, reducing violence, and enhancing positive behavioral changes (Woo, Stohr, Hemmens, Lutze, Hamilton, & Yoon, 2016). Interestingly, the findings suggest creating an environment where inmates feel safe decreases incidents of misconduct and violence. This information is of interest as although prison is intended to be a place of isolation, creating an environment that fosters social ties may produce greater outcomes for reintegration and violence reduction. In another study among indigenous peoples in Canada and rates of substance use (Cao, Burton Jr., & Liu, 2018), researchers divided social support into the following categories: marriage, strength of familiar ties, religiosity, residential mobility, and lack of timely interventions. Findings suggest that of the categories measured, strength of ties, no timely substance use intervention, and residential mobility were significant correlates with substance use. Furthermore, those who identified as possessing a Christian belief system were statistically less likely to use drugs (Cao, Burton Jr., & Liu, 2018).

Over the course of the last few decades, social support theory has acquired greater exposure and consideration in the realm of criminology. Community supervision agencies have recognized the importance of social support within the context of felony supervision. For example, the TRAS assessment has a specific domain devoted to family and social support. Within this domain, questions regarding the level to which the client experiences emotional or personal support, stability of residence, and the level to which they are satisfied with the support they receive from those they consider family and close friends.

Cullen's (1994) social support theory has found general support in the literature and its ability to reduce crime is promising (Brezina & Azimi, 2018). Adult probation places a strong emphasis on the importance of social support during office visits with clients, but also integrates

how social bonds play a role in the lives of the probationer for a comprehensive view of the offender's personal life. In addition to social support, research has also demonstrated that strong social bonds may reduce the likelihood that someone offends or reoffends (Laub, Nagin, and Sampson, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1990; Sampson, Laub, & Wimer, 2006).

Social Bonds

Hirschi's (1969) social control theory does not seek to explain why an individual may engage in delinquent behaviors, but rather why they do not. At the micro-level, control theories postulate individuals are dissuaded from engaging in crime or delinquent behaviors due to their prosocial ties within a socioeconomic structure (Kornhauser, 1978). Societal bonds, such as the degree to which one embraces moral validity of the law and conventional norms, commitment to educational and occupational goals, participation in conventional activities, and emotional closeness to others are important as they create conformity within society (Hirschi, 1969). If one or more of these bonds are broken and/or weakened, the individual is at increased likelihood to engage in criminal activity (Hirschi, 1969).

Sampson and Laub extended Hirschi's social control theory by examining what social bonds mitigate delinquency in adulthood. Their research reflects the bonds of commitment in the form of job stability and attachment to conventional norms (such as marriage, economic goals, education, and employment) appear to be stabilizers that drastically influence adult deviance (Sampson & Laub, 1990). Turning points in life, such as marriage and employment, are positive attachments that initiate or reinforce positive behaviors. Conversely, when these bonds are weakened, they too may result in delinquent behaviors in adults. When individuals have a stake in conformity—having ties to positive relationships and employment—it aids in

forming goals and a trajectory towards a life plan which may be key factors in cessation of criminality and offending. Thus, the quality of the bond is of equal importance.

Sampson and Laub's (1990) theory of adult bonds has received much support (see Laub, Sampson, & Sweeten, 2017; Sampson, Laub, & Wilmer, 2006; Wright, Cullen, & Wooldredge, 2000). Cusick, Havlicek, and Courtney (2012), for example, analyzed a sample of foster youth transitioning into adulthood and found employment and education to be buffers in minimizing incidents of arrest in adulthood. These findings are significant as all individuals in the sample were considered "at risk" from the starting baseline due to being foster children. Given similar childhood experiences, employment and having educational goals as they transitioned into adulthood reduced the risk of arrest up to 32 percent (Cusick et al., 2012). Doherty (2006) analysis of the Gluecks' longitudinal study suggests that individuals with high levels of self-control and high levels of social integration were statistically more likely to desist from criminal offending. Additionally, Sampson and Laub (1990) found commitment and attachment to be significant buffers in mitigating criminal and delinquent behaviors in young adults. Seemingly, factors such as employment and family/social support are relevant in identifying protective factors that promote success for individuals placed on probation. Findings from a meta-analysis examining the relationship between attachment to parents and delinquency in adolescents suggest that adult bonds such as marriage and employment are modifiers for adult criminality (Hoeve, Stams, Van der Put, Dubas, Van der Laan & Gerris, 2012). Identifying significant adult bonds provides a correlation to continued deviance as well as the prevalence of coming into contact or continued contact with the criminal justice system.

Low Self-Control

Rather than looking outside the individual, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that the locus of control resides inside the individual. Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime reflects low self-control as a central construct in offending. Simply put, the lesser degree of self-control a person possesses, the greater the probability of criminal activity or deviance. Self-control is thought to remain relatively constant from late childhood into adulthood (Barnes, El Sayed & TenEyck, Nedelec, Connolly, Schwartz, Boutwell, Wrgiht, Beaver & Anderson, 2017; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999). These behaviors are associated with individuals who desire immediate satisfaction, actively seek out risks, and are often coupled with alcohol and/or substance use/abuse (Watts & Iratzoqui, 2019).

A general theory of crime has received general support in the literature (see Evans, Cullen, Burton, Dunaway, & Benson, 1997; LaGrange & Silverman, 1999; Pratt & Cullen, 2000). Hay (2001), for example, found a moderate level of support for self-control theory in a study of urban teenagers. Furthermore, a meta-analysis on self-control revealed that it was one of the strongest predictors of antisocial behaviors (Pratt & Cullen, 2000). Pratt and Cullen (2000) suggest that regardless of variant degrees of measurement utilized, self-control is an important predictor of criminal behaviors. Multiple studies have demonstrated this indicating that low self-control is significantly related to criminal behavior (see, e.g., Intravia, Gibbs, Wolff, Paez, Bernheimer, & Piquero (2018); Nofziger & Newton (2018); Tittle, Ward, & Grasmick, 2003; Vazsonyi & Huang, 2010; Wolfe, Reisig, & Holtfreter, 2016). Moreover, individuals with low self-control may exhibit the same behaviors associated with criminality, which may result in an increased likelihood of victimization (Schreck, Stewart & Fisher, 2006).

In this way, one's self-control can influence daily activities and/or risky lifestyle choices—which, in turn, increases the risk of both victimization and offending. A meta-analysis

revealed that self-control has a general effect on victimization across studies (Pratt, Turanovic, Fox, & Wright, 2014). Pratt et al. (2014) found the effect of self-control on victimization to be strong but less powerful than the effects of self-control on offending, and self-control remained a consistent predictor across all studies. Low self-control, impulsivity, and risk seeking behaviors are analyzed throughout the TRAS assessment by questioning if individuals feel in control over the events of their lives, if they are able to handle situations as they appear, and a scale of how in control they feel over the events in his or her life. Self-control is captured in the TRAS domains of criminal history, education, employment, and financial situation, and criminal attitudes and behaviors.

In summation, theory is integral to the principles and application of probation evidence-based practices. The TRAS assessment directs officers to take into consideration the totality of the interview as well and collateral information available (i.e. criminal history, case file, urinalysis /drug test results, counselor contacts etc.) while scoring to identify areas where low self-control, social support, social bonds, and other elements of theoretically informed risk may interfere with supervision compliance. Conversely, domains in which the probationer scores low, should be considered areas of strength which can be utilized in beneficial ways. This is because high scores indicate areas of need or barriers within an offender's life, wherein low scores reflect stability.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The idea that an individual may continue to reside in the community, modify their behavior, and become a proactive member of society appeals to many in favor of a rehabilitative approach to crime (Burton, Latessa, & Barker, 1992). Even in historically conservative states, research reflects an openness to support treatment in lieu of incarceration, particularly for non-

violent offenders (Thielo, Cullen, Cohen, & Chouhy, 2016). Using a sample on over a thousand respondents from Texas, researchers found 34.8 percent cited rehabilitation as the preferable goal in sanctioning non-violent offenders (Thielo, et.al, 2016). Offenders sentenced to community supervision—otherwise known as probation—often walk a fine line between incarceration and freedom. For practitioners of community supervision, it is imperative to understand the underpinnings of criminogenic behavior as well as research-based evidence in order to amplify compliance and motivate positive behavioral changes in those they service.

In the state of Texas, probation has a maximum sentence of ten years for felony offenses and may be deferred or adjudicated (42A C.C.P § 053). A deferred sentence means that a criminal conviction has been deferred pending successful completion of their sentence (42A C.C.P § 101). Adjudicated sentences are convictions and the incarceration time the individual would have received as a punishment is suspended with the expectation for the individual to complete the court ordered conditions of community supervision (42A C.C.P § 001). Both deferred and adjudicated sentences are subject to revocation in the event the offender obtains technical violations and/or new offenses while ordered to community supervision. Moreover, it is the role of the probation officer to curtail delinquent behaviors that lead to violations. Revocations, particularly technical revocations, are of utmost concern as they are reflective of a department's officer efficacy. However, it is equally important to review success within probation populations.

It has been noted that success is difficult to define as the perimeters for achievement for offenders and practitioners has not been thoroughly investigated (Brinson, 2013), and is limited across research. For practitioners, success could simply mean the completion of a court ordered sentence, while others may define success as a total cessation from criminal behaviors that

extends beyond a probation sentence—reflecting complete desistance from offending across the remainder of the lifespan. The lack of cohesion in the definition of success reflects a need for clarity for practitioners and scholars alike. Furthermore, a well-structured outline of success would clarify outcomes and promote greater efficiency in data collection/classification measures.

In one of the earliest reviews of supervision efficacy, Mead (1937) purposed that in order to measure success in adult offenders, the probation department must continually analyze the individual's physical and mental condition, employment, family relations, as well as recreational habits throughout the course of supervision. These practices remain consistent with the applications of community supervision today. It is not expected for an individual to go the course of supervision without a violation, however, the impetus in reacting to violations is critical. Contemporary evidence-based practices employ Mead's rationale in response to violations by utilizing a progressive response model. Additionally, effective classification principles have been created to guide criminal justice professionals in the identification of dynamic risk factors for recidivism (Latessa, Lemke, Makarios, & Smith, 2010).

Many agencies recognize that not all offenders who commit the same type of offense have the same set of needs, barriers, or personal strengths (Bonta, Ruggie, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008). Failure to utilize scientifically recognized treatment models greatly diminishes success and propagates ignorance within the field of corrections (Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002). Assessment tools such as the TRAS were designed to alert officers as to which areas are of concern in a client's life and aid in more effective method of case planning. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness, the appropriate level of treatment must be applied based on sound principles rather than practitioner opinion or intuition. The current literature supports the emphasis of program fidelity and—although professional judgment still is an important factor—

it must be supported by objective reasoning (Rochford, 2013). Therefore, in order to achieve success, officers must focus on the appropriate level of treatment tailored to the specific needs of the offender.

In order to achieve success, departments must have a valid and reliable tool with interrater reliability. The first-generation risk assessments were based solely on the professional's judgment and experience in unstructured interviews wherein treatment and risk to society was prescribed based on unobservable standards (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). Intuition based prediction tools created room for subjective biases to infiltrate into the case plan and potentially tainted interventions that protect the public and support prosocial changes (VanBenschoten, 2008). Second-generation tools, although more sophisticated, placed greater emphasis on static factors and did not allow for credit to be given to offenders who make positive strides (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). Third-generation tools supersede prior tools by integrating a measure for criminogenic needs (Bonta & Andrews 2016). Many departments currently utilize third-generation tools. However, there has been a movement towards fourth-generation assessments—such as the TRAS. Fourth-generation assessment systems integrate an element of case management wherein responsivity considerations are applied, which relates to how the probation officer will best supervise the client (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). Although most probation departments have moved past the first-generation tools that allow an individual's "sense" to be included in the assessment, officers indeed may be still relying on intuition. By doing so, they may be overlooking critical components of success in their clients lives by only focusing on the barriers. Latessa (2002) furthers this point by highlighting that such biases can cause oversight in critical information while over inflating the emphasis of trivial information. It

stands to reason a healthy mixture of tactics could be beneficial in the lives of the felony probationer.

Multiple studies have examined the validity of risk assessments (see Anthony & Oldroyd, 1979; Douglas & Webster, 1999; Wong & Gordon, 2006). In a study of over two thousand felony probationers, Sims and Jones (1997) found that African American males were at significant risk of probation failure. Many, risk assessment scores were positively associated with failure and appeared to be accurate overall in predicating recidivism (Sims and Jones, 1997). Morgan's (1994) study which focused on 266 felony probationers from Tennessee, on the other hand, indicated that race was not related to success or failure on probation—perhaps suggesting that geographic region within the study could be the driving predictor.

A meta-analysis conducted by Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen (1990) revealed that targeting criminogenic needs, modality of treatment, and delivery of services to those in greatest need are consistent factors of effective recidivism reduction methods. Lowenkamp and Latessa (2002) evaluated 13,221 offenders and found there were very few programs that reduced recidivism in low-risk offenders. Therefore, failure to appropriately categorize offenders by risk could result in the inappropriate application of interventions and tactics that are actually harmful to the probationer. It is evident that proper risk assessment tools are necessary guiding principles in community supervision tactics. Assessments should never be regarded by practitioners as a “check off the list” routine task but regarded as an important information gathering session which guides the course of the offender's probation.

CURRENT STUDY

The current study seeks to add to the literature regarding modern risk assessment tools and predicting success for probationers. Although probation departments nationwide have a firm

grasp on the need for assessment driven supervision (Bonta & Andrews, 2016), more information is needed on the most recent wave of modern assessment tools, such as the TRAS. It is also important to consider additional information that can be obtained from assessment tools other than what areas present current barriers at the time of the assessment, such as areas of strength.

There is a limited availability of studies that focus primarily on successful probation completion (see Morgan, 1995; Sims & Jones, 1997). Although many of the variables within this study have been explored previously, few studies analyze these variables to identify protective factors that may lead to successful completion adult felony probation. For many years it was thought that “nothing works” (Martinson, 1974) but there is now evidence that offenders can be “rehabilitated” and practitioners can aid in such motivations through assessment-driven supervision (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Cullen & Gilbert, 2012; Cullen, Smith, Lowencamp, & Latessa, 2009). Although assessments are more frequently utilized to predict risk of recidivism, they can also be used to provide information to promote success. Early dismissal and time credit completions of probation are indicative of those who satisfied conditions of supervision within an expedited period and/or exhibited a level of achievement while on probation as time credits are granted to those who have successfully completed certain tasks such as treatment/education programs, obtained degrees, paid restitution, or other common conditions ordered (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, 2010). The current study utilizes the TRAS assessment, a fourth-generation risk assessment tool, to examine which domains correlate to success rather than failure. For the purposes of this study, “success” is classified as an individual whose case was closed as early dismissal or expiration due to time credits.

METHODS

Data

Data for the current study were gathered from a large, urban, adult probation department known as Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) in North Texas. The probation department selected was chosen for its diverse population and because it oversees one of the largest offender populations in the State of Texas. The CSCD selected supervises approximately 15,000 felony and misdemeanor offenders court ordered to supervision at any given month. Within the selected judicial district, there are approximately 9,000 felony offenders and 6,000 misdemeanor offenders who report in person to a probation officer as directed, otherwise known as direct supervision. The population supervised is primarily White, which comprises 46.08 percent of total offender population; the remainder of the population is 27.91 percent Black, 24.82 percent Hispanic, and 1.18 percent Other. Additionally, males comprise 72.05 percent of the offender population and females' makeup the remaining 27.95 percent supervised.

The current study data was gathered from the probation department's direct, felony offender population who were placed on court ordered supervision during 2015 ($N=3,252$) who have since completed supervision successfully or have been revoked from supervision in order to evaluate the TRAS assessment domains which may be responsible for promoting success. This leads to a total sample size of over two thousand offenders for the current study ($n=2,069$). The time frame allows for enough time to see individuals adjust to supervision, incur violations, and respond to court efforts. Additionally, the socioeconomic and racial diversity of the probation department selected allows for testing and observation across theoretical framework and socioeconomic strata. By selecting individuals who have subsequently completed and/or been

discharged from supervision since being placed on probation in 2015, the study is able to analyze which factors of self-reported areas of stability are supportive of accomplishment.

MEASURES

Dependent Variables

Early Dismissal. A person can be discharged from probation for the following reasons: expiration, early dismissal, revocation, administrative closure, and death. Deceased probationers were not included in the current study as they do not count as failures or successful terminations. Expiration is a discharge reason for those who have expired from the full-term of supervision or have been granted time credit reduction for qualifying offenses and completing tasks associated with time credit early release. Early dismissal includes probationers who have been granted early dismissal from their probation sentences by the court for compliance. Administrative closures include closure of supervision which has been transferred back to the original county of jurisdiction. Revocation of supervision is categorized into subsequent arrests and technical reasons for revocation. Technical violations include, but are not limited to, positive urinalysis tests or failure to submit urinalysis testing as directed, failure to report to probation as directed, failure to enroll, attend, or complete treatment, education, or counseling as ordered, failure to comply with no contact orders, interlock orders, or other electronic monitoring devices. The variable was coded so that 0 = *revocation, administrative closure, and expiration*, 1 = *early dismissal and time credits*.

Independent Variables

Offense Type. Offense type refers to the statute in which a probationer accepts a guilty plea. Offense descriptors are utilized to reflect what a probationer is being supervised for and what conditions they are subsequently assigned after the assessment has been completed. For the

purposes of this study, offense type has been coded such that 0 = *drug offense*, 1 = *violent offense*, 2 = *alcohol offense*, 3 = *sex offense*, 4 = *property offense*, 5 = *other*.

Offense Level. Offense level refers to the probation felony degree classification.

Offense level dictates the minimum and maximum number of months a defendant can serve on community supervision and sentencing term guidelines in the event the probationer is revoked. Additionally, offense level reflects where a probationer would serve their sentence if they were revoked. Offense level was reverse coded such that 0 = *state jail felony*, 1 = *first degree felony*, 2 = *second degree felony*, 3 = *third degree felony*.

Criminal Attitudes and Behaviors. The criminal attitudes and behaviors category is the most in-depth domain to score within the TRAS system and has minimum possible score of 0 and a maximum score of 12. The questions scored for this domain are: overall criminal attitudes, concern for others, feels lack of control over events in their lives, sees no problem in telling lies, engaging in risk-seeking behaviors, walks away from a fight, and belief in the statement “do unto others before they do unto you.” A score of 0 indicates the probationer has no criminal attitudes/behaviors, while a score of 12 indicates the individual has many criminal attitudes/behaviors. The domain provides the probation officer an idea of cognitive behavioral control, oppositional ideologies, or lack of prosocial reasoning the probationer may possess. The scores for criminal attitudes and behaviors have been reverse coded for analysis such that the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain (i.e., the lower they score in criminal behavior).

Criminal History. To properly score the domain of criminal history, the assessor is to review the criminal history and all available information. This includes a review of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC) rap sheet as well

as information within the respective county databases or electronic case management systems available to the user. The score for the criminal history domain ranges from 0 to a maximum of 8. The questions used to score the domain of criminal history are: most serious charge or arrest at the age of 16 or younger, number of prior adult felony conviction or deferred adjudications, prior sentences as an adult to jail or prison, any official misconduct as an adult while incarcerated, prior community supervision or deferred adjudication sentences as an adult, and prior supervisions have ever been revoked and sentenced to prison. The scores for criminal history have been reverse coded so that higher scores represent *lower* levels of criminal histories.

Education, Employment, Financial Situation. The domain takes stock of highest education obtained, suspension or expulsions from school, employment status at the time of arrest for current probated offense, if they are currently employed or enrolled in school at the time of the assessment, structured versus unstructured time, and current financial situation. A score of 0 is indicative of a client having a current stable socioeconomic situation or foundation. The maximum score that can be obtained in the domain is a score of 6, which indicates a low level of education, significant periods of unemployment, unstructured use of free time, and an unstable financial situation. The scores for education, employment, and financial situation have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain.

Family/Social Support. The TRAS scores four aspects regarding family and social support. The domain has a minimum score of 0 or maximum domain score of 4. The domain is geared to reflect familial history as well as personal satisfaction with family support systems. It is important that this domain analyses the stability of residence, not the safety or quality of residence in which the probationer resides. Questions related to the family and social support

domain are parental criminal record, emotional or personal support available from family or others, level of satisfaction with current support from family or others and stability of residence measured in number of moves within the last 12 months. The scores for family and social support have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain.

Neighborhood. Unlike the domain of family and social support, the area of neighborhood is utilized to encompass the safety and overall quality of the area in which the probationer lives. The domain of neighborhood analyses if the offender resides in a high crime area and drugs readily available in the probationer's neighborhood. The minimum score achievable is 0 and a maximum score of 2. The scores for this domain have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain.

Peer Associations. The peer association domain analyzes the number of criminal friends the individual associates with, contact with prior criminal peers, gang membership, and criminal activities in which the probationer may engage. The domain has a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 4. A score of 0 indicates no criminal affiliations and a score of 4 suggest the majority of the probationer's friends are criminal, they actively contact or seek out criminal peers, are active in a gang, and strongly identify with criminal activities. The scores for peer associations have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain.

Substance Use. The TRAS domain of substance use specifically separates alcohol use from the use/abuse of other illegal substances. The questions scored within this domain are: the age the individual first began using alcohol, if the probationer has ever used illegal drugs, if

substance use has cause problems, if drug use has caused problems with employment, and if drug use has cause any problems with family or friends. The minimum score for this domain is 0 and the maximum score achievable is 7. The questions gauge if the probationer has never used illegal drugs, used in the past, or is actively using. The scores for substance use have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present within that domain.

Total Risk Score. The TRAS total risk score is the cumulative numeric value of all domain scores. The sum total equates to what risk level the probationer will be assigned. The minimum score for total risk is 0 and a maximum score of 47. The scores for total risk score have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores, the *lower* the risk they present.

Total Risk Level. The TRAS total risk level is determined by the overall total risk score. Total risk levels are low, low/moderate, moderate, and high. A risk level of low is obtained by a total score range from 0 to 7 for males, and 0 to 8 for females. A risk level of low/moderate is obtained by a total score range from 8 to 15 for males, and 9 to 14 for females. To fall under the category of moderate, a male must have a total risk score range between 16 and 23, while female respondents must score between 15 and 25. Finally, high-risk male offenders score range from 24 to 47, and female high-risk offender score ranges from 26 to 47. The scores for total risk level have been reverse coded for analysis purposes as the higher a probationer scores represents a *lower* recidivism risk.

Age. Age reflects the probationer's chronological age in years and ranges from 17 to 83 years.

Sex. Sex was coded so that 0 = *female* and 1 = *male*.

Race. Race was coded such that 0 = *White*, 1 = *Black*.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity was coded such that 0 = *non-Hispanic* and 1 = *Hispanic*.

Descriptive statistics for all variables used in the current study can be found in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

ANALYTIC PLAN

The analyses will unfold in a series of interrelated steps. The analyses will utilize multivariate logistic regression as the outcome variable is dichotomous. Odds ratios (*ORs*) will be utilized in order to assess the magnitude of the effect of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable—controlling for the influence of other variables within the model. Odds ratios are easily interpreted as a percentage change in the *odds* of early discharge as a function of a one-unit change in the independent variable (i.e., $OR-1*100$). To further illustrate, an odds ratio greater than one will indicate an individual is more likely to experience successful early release from supervision compared to others in the sample. An odds ratio less than one will indicate an individual within that category is less likely to experience successful early release from supervision compared to others in the sample.

The first step in the analyses will assess the relationships between legal variables (i.e., offense type and offense level) and nonlegal (i.e., demographic) variables on early dismissal. The data analyzed are age, sex, and race. Step two in the analyses will review the association between the overall TRAS assessment variables (i.e., risk score and risk level) and nonlegal variables on early dismissal. Step three will examine the effects of legal variables, overall TRAS score and level, and nonlegal variables on early dismissal. The final step will analyze the impact of legal variables, the individual domains within the TRAS assessment, and nonlegal variables on early dismissal from felony supervision.

In addition, because there are a limited number of individuals released early (i.e., a small amount of 1's on the dependent variable) Firth's logistic regression will be used as a sensitivity analysis. The Firth method will be employed in order to reduce bias for a limited number in one group—in this case, a small number of offenders being released early with 429 (18.05 percent of the sample) qualifying for early release. In addition, employing the penalized likelihood approach reduces small-sample size in maximum likelihood approximation (Williams, 2019).

RESULTS

Table 2 can be read from top to bottom, moving from left to right. The first column (i.e., Model 1) presents the relationships between non-legal variables on early dismissal. Column 2 (i.e., Model 2) presents the associations between the overall TRAS assessment variables effect on early dismissal from felony probation, while the third column (i.e., Model 3) presents the relationships between non-legal variables and overall TRAS variables effect on early dismissal, and the fourth column (i.e., Model 4) presents the relationships between non-legal variables and the individual TRAS domain variables effect on early dismissal from adult felony probation.

*****Insert Table 2 about here*****

Looking at Model 1, sex was a significant factor in early release as male reflects an odds ratio of 0.89 ($OR = 0.89, p < 0.05$). These figures suggest that male probationers experience an 11 percent decrease in the likelihood of early successful release from felony probation. Race was significant as Black offender's odds of early release were reduced by 31 percent ($OR = 0.69, p < 0.05$).

Turning to Model 2, total risk level was significant with an odds ratio of 0.85 ($OR = 0.85, p < 0.05$), indicating for every one-unit increase in total risk level results in a 15 percent decrease in the likelihood of early release. Male was significant with an odds ratio of 0.86 ($OR = 0.86,$

$p < 0.05$), indicating a 14 percent decrease in the odds of early release from felony probation for male offenders. Race was significant, with Black probationers having a 35 percent decrease in likelihood of successful early release ($OR = 0.65, p < 0.05$).

As can be seen in Model 3, the total risk level was significant with an odds ratio of 0.86 ($OR = 0.86, p < 0.05$), suggesting that for every one-unit increase in total risk level is related to a 14 percent decrease in the likelihood of early release. Results indicate males are 14 percent less likely to receive successful completion from felony probation ($OR = 0.86, p < 0.05$). Results indicate Black probationers experience a 33 percent decrease in the likelihood of successful completion of supervision ($OR = 0.67 p < 0.05$).

Looking at Model 4, criminal history has an odds ratio of 1.27 ($OR = 1.27, p < 0.05$), indicating that a one-unit decrease in score increases the odds of early release from community supervision by 26 percent. The education and employment domain has an odds ratio of 1.28 ($OR = 1.28 p < 0.05$), suggesting that for every one unit increase in education and employment, the odds of early dismissal increase by 26 percent. Being male significantly reduced the odds of early release by 14 percent ($OR = 0.86, p < 0.05$), while Black probationer's odds of early dismissal was decreased by 27 percent ($OR = 0.73, p < 0.05$). In Model 4, the total TRAS scores were not included as they are the summed scores of each domain—thus they share 100 percent variation.

DISCUSSION

While multiple studies have analyzed the correlation between assessed risk and recidivism; however, little is known about correlates predicting success among adult felony probationers (Ashford & LeCroy, 1988; Luong & Wormith, 2011). Therefore, examinations of validated probation assessment tool elements which correlate to successful early release from

felony probation are largely missing from the current literature. The current study attempts to bridge the gap in the literature by analyzing a large sample of low, low/moderate, moderate, and high-risk adult offenders to identify areas within the TRAS assessment that are associated with successful early completion of felony probation.

Several notable findings emerged from the current analyses. Specifically pertaining to the TRAS, variables of criminal history and education, employment, and financial situation were associated with early dismissal from felony community supervision. These findings support Laub and Sampson's (1993) assertions that adult bonds of education and employment are integral in minimizing delinquency and reducing recidivism. Therefore, job placement for felony probationers is essential, especially for Black offenders. Practitioners should also take schedules into consideration for employed probationers in case management practices and be cognizant of appointment and/or drug testing scheduling which could interfere employment. Additionally, when violations occur, the type of sanction (i.e. short jail sentence or treatment/education classes) should be considered as it could lead to employment termination. It is noted that the severity of sanctions in response to violations has little effect on recidivism (Belenko, Fagan, & Dumanovsky, 2014). Thus, it stands to reason that sanctions such as increased community service restitution hours may be better suited for employed probationers as it can be completed outside of work hours, reduces county jail populations, and allows probationers to give back to the community. By failing to employ creative responses to violations, probation officers could ultimately be prescribing sanctions that may do more harm than good by interfering with elements that promote success.

Support of the efficacy of the TRAS in the current study is evident. Indeed, findings that the level and degree of offense have no effect on early dismissal from community supervision

reflects that the risk assessment is doing its job appropriately. Scholars support that risk/needs tools are paramount to effective supervision and probation should be driven by the risk principle (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990). Therefore, it is important to develop tools which accurately categorize offender risk and identify the correct target population for treatment and educational programming.

Race and sex were found to predict early release despite controlling for a host of legal and risk factors. Findings indicating that Black probationers experience a significant decrease in the likelihood of early dismissal when compared to their White counterparts are of particular importance. These findings are of concern as early dismissal is ultimately decided by judicial discretion. Although the assessment precludes elements of bias via interrater reliability, it becomes useless if not considered within the decision-making matrix in deciding who receives early dismissal and who does not. The study was able to highlight these findings as the analyses controlled for the influence of legally relevant variables.

One potential explanation for the nonlegal results effect on early dismissal is that the data are reflective of one probation department within the state of Texas, thus limiting generalizability. Additionally, Texas is a historically punitive state with strict guidelines for those under community supervision (Thielo et al., 2016). According to the Legislative Budget Board (2019) 55.7 percent of the state's total felony direct supervision population were revoked to prison, 38.2 percent were revoked to state jail, and 6.1 percent were revoked to county jail during the 2018 fiscal year. Such high revocation numbers may reflect an overall judicial reluctance to release probationers from felony supervision early in fear of recidivism or a perceived risk to society. Another explanation for these results is that economic status plays a role as legal representation may not easily be afforded by all that are supervised. According to

the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), approximately 15 percent of Texas residents live in poverty. Thus, proper representation may not be an option for many, considering the fact that early dismissal motions require legal assistance post sentencing. One must also consider the effect of the courtroom workgroup and legal social networks. As such, motions for early dismissal that are attorney initiated could be given judicial preference, greater consideration, or enacted more swiftly than those up for mandatory review. Regardless of the underlying reasons, these findings suggest a need for additional examination into the processes and procedures for motions for early dismissal.

Limitations

One possible limitation of the current study is that the data examined does not delineate the percentage of offenders who were granted early dismissal based on attorney-initiated motions or mandatory review, limiting the scope of explanation for these effects. Another possible limitation with the data is that there is an element of starting bias that cannot be quantified. Supervision officers can submit recommendations to the court when a motion for early dismissal or half-term review presents itself. It is possible, either knowingly or unknowingly, that a probation officer may not endorse early dismissal for many reasons. Some officers may be hesitant to support early dismissal due to type of offense, fear of being responsible if the offender commits a new crime, or racial biases for example. However, it is important to recognize that judiciaries are ultimately responsible for the approval or denial of early dismissal or time credit approval for release from community supervision despite the recommendations presented by the assigned community supervision officer. Despite these limitations, original data with a large sample size was utilized which indicates a need for further exploration into non-legal effects on early dismissal from felony community supervision. Future studies should examine the

correlations between attorney-initiated early dismissal from community supervision in order to improve upon current policies and practices and reduce bias. Future studies integrating early dismissal rates among multiple counties from various states would be beneficial for a deeper understanding of judicial preference as well as assessment tool efficacy in predicting success among different populations.

Policy Recommendations

As findings suggest non-legal factors play a role in early dismissal, departments should be cognizant of how case summaries are reported to the court for early dismissal consideration. Simple adjustments, such as excluding demographic information, requiring motions for early dismissal (both mandatory review and attorney initiated) to go through the probation department, and solely be presented to the judge by an uninvolved party, may reduce bias and increase success. Minor adjustments to how requests are processed could be enacted at an organizational level which could produce positive results. Additionally, as a significant contributor to successful completion, employment, education, and financial elements should be integrated into all offender case plans/supervision strategies to enhance long-lasting behavioral changes.

Conclusion

By employing modern assessments, probation officers are better equipped to identify areas of need to promote greater chances of success in the clients served (Latessa & Lovins, 2010). Unfortunately, areas of strength in the lives of probationers are often overlooked, or simply ignored. For example, a low score in the domain of employment indicates the individual has a minimal degree of need in this area. This should tell us the probationer has a prosocial domain that can be used to mitigate and reduce risk in other areas. Failure to discuss or take prosocial elements into consideration could inadvertently ruin an aspect that promotes success.

Despite prior evidence, some agencies that utilize assessment instruments to quantify risk ignore the outcome and prescribe the same treatment to everyone (Latessa et al., 2002).

Research conducted on swift, certain, and fair sanctioning models reflects less than favorable results meaning that clearly defined guidelines and punitive outcomes are not necessarily fair, only that they are the same for everyone (Cullen, Pratt, Turanovic, 2016). Neglecting empirical research in practice can create a culture of enacting sanctions and treatment that are not only ineffective but potentially tarnish the legitimacy of the field of corrections and those working in it. It is important to develop methods which accurately categorize offender risk and identify the correct target population for certain treatment and educational programming.

Probation agencies serve a larger purpose in reducing prison populations, keeping individuals in the community, and keeping familial units intact. Findings from the current study indicate that stable employment and limiting criminal contact (i.e. criminal history) are areas in which probation officers must focus their attention in order to reduce criminogenic tendencies. It also reflects areas that probation officers must take into consideration when recommending sanctions to the court. Conversely, limiting demographic information, such as race and sex, in case summaries or motions for early dismissal may reduce the odds of bias in determining early dismissal for minority populations. By changing the way departments utilize assessment tools, probation officers can make the difference between a client's success or failure.

REFERENCES

- Agnew, R. (2007). Pressured into crime: An overview of general strain theory.
- Anderson, E. (2000). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. WW Norton & Company.
- Andrews, D.A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. D. (1990). Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. *Criminal justice and Behavior, 17*(1), 19-52.
- Andrews, D. A., Zinger, I., Hoge, R. D., Bonta, J., Gendreau, P., & Cullen, F. T. (1990). Does correctional treatment work? A clinically relevant and psychologically informed meta-analysis. *Criminology, 28*(3), 369-404.
- Anthony, A., & Oldroyd, R. (1979). Predictive validity of the history/risk assessment for parolees.
- Ashford, J. B., & LeCroy, C. W. (1988). Predicting recidivism: An evaluation of the Wisconsin juvenile probation and aftercare risk instrument. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 15*(2), 141-151.
- Barker, V. (2011). Decarceration: Political possibility, social sentiment, and structural reality. *Criminology & Public Policy, 10*, 283.
- Barnes, J. C., El Sayed, S. A., TenEyck, M., Nedelec, J. L., Connolly, E. J., Schwartz, J. A., Boutwell, B., Wright, J., Beaver, K., & Anderson, N. E. (2017). Estimating relative stability in developmental research: A critique of modern approaches and a novel method. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 33*(2), 319-346.
- Barrera, M., & Li, S. A. (1996). The relation of family support to adolescents' psychological distress and behavior problems. In *Handbook of social support and the family* (pp. 313-343). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Beaver, K. M., Barnes, J.C., & Boutwell, B. (2015). *The nurture versus biosocial debate in criminology: On origins of criminal behavior and criminality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Belenko, S., Fagan, J. A., & Dumanovsky, T. (1994). The effects of legal sanctions on recidivism in special drug courts. *Justice System Journal, 17*(1), 53-81.
- Benedict, W. R., & Huff-Corzine, L. (1997). Return to the scene of the punishment: Recidivism of adult male property offenders on felony probation, 1986-1989. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 34*(2), 237-252.

- Berg, M.T., Stewart, E.A., Schreck, C.J., & Simons, R.L. (2012). The victim-offender overlap in context: Examining the role of neighborhood street culture. *Criminology*, 50(2), 359-390.
- Bonta, J., Rugge, T., Scott, T. L., Bourgon, G., & Yessine, A. K. (2008). Exploring the black box of community supervision. *Journal of offender rehabilitation*, 47(3), 248-270.
- Bonta, J., & Andrews, D.A. (2016). *The psychology of criminal conduct*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brezina, T., & Azimi, A. M. (2018). Social support, loyalty to delinquent peers, and offending: An elaboration and test of the differential social support hypothesis. *Deviant Behavior*, 39(5), 648-663.
- Brinson, A. (2013). Success, Desistance and Relationships Between Probation Officers and Probationers: A Social Work Perspective.
- Burton, V. S., Latessa, E. J., & Barker, T. (1992). The role of probation officers: An examination of statutory requirements. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 8(4), 273-282.
- Cao, L., Burton Jr, V. S., & Liu, L. (2018). Correlates of illicit drug use among Indigenous peoples in Canada: a test of social support theory. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 62(14), 4510-4527.
- Colvin, M., Cullen, F. T., & Ven, T. V. (2002). Coercion, social support, and crime: An emerging theoretical consensus. *Criminology*, 40(1), 19-42.
- Connolly, M.M. (2003). *A critical examination of actuarial offender-based prediction assessments: Guidance for the next generation of assessments* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Cullen, F. T. (1994). Social support as an organizing concept for criminology: Presidential address to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. *Justice Quarterly*, 11(4), 527-559.
- Cullen, F.T., Pratt, T.C., & Turanovic, J.J. (2016). It's hopeless: Beyond zero-tolerance supervision. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 15, 1215.
- Cullen, F. T., & Gilbert, K. E. (2012). *Reaffirming rehabilitation*. Routledge.
- Cullen, F. T., Smith, P., Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. J. (2009). Nothing works revisited: deconstructing Farabee's rethinking rehabilitation. *Victims and Offenders*, 4(2), 101-123.
- Cullen, F. T., & Wright, J. P. (1997). Liberating the anomie-strain paradigm: Implications from social support theory. *The future of anomie theory*, 187-206.

- Cusick, G. R., Havlicek, J. R., & Courtney, M. E. (2012). Risk for arrest: The role of social bonds in protecting foster youth making the transition to adulthood. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82(1), 19.
- Doherty, E. E. (2006). Self-control, social bonds, and desistance: A test of life-course interdependence. *Criminology*, 44(4), 807-833.
- Douglas, K. S., & Webster, C. D. (1999). The HCR-20 violence risk assessment scheme: Concurrent validity in a sample of incarcerated offenders. *Criminal justice and behavior*, 26(1), 3-19.
- DuBois, D. L., Felner, R. D., Meares, H., & Krier, M. (1994). Prospective investigation of the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage, life stress, and social support on early adolescent adjustment. *Journal of abnormal psychology*, 103(3), 511.
- Evans, T. D., Cullen, F. T., Burton Jr, V. S., Dunaway, R. G., & Benson, M. L. (1997). The social consequences of self-control: Testing the general theory of crime. *Criminology*, 35(3), 475-504.
- Geerken, M. R., & Hayes, H. D. (1993). Probation and parole: Public risk and the future of incarceration alternatives. *Criminology*, 31(4), 549-564.
- Gillum, T. L. (2019). The intersection of intimate partner violence and poverty in Black communities. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 46, 37-44.
- Gottfredson, M. R., Hirschi, T. (1990). A general theory of crime. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hay, C. (2001). Parenting, self-control, and delinquency: A test of self-control theory. *Criminology*, 39(3), 707-736.
- Henggeler, S. W., McCart, M. R., Cunningham, P. B., & Chapman, J. E. (2012). Enhancing the effectiveness of juvenile drug courts by integrating evidence-based practices. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 80(2), 264.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. New York: NY, Routledge.
- Hoeve, M., Stams, G. J. J., Van der Put, C. E., Dubas, J. S., Van der Laan, P. H., & Gerris, J. R. (2012). A meta-analysis of attachment to parents and delinquency. *Journal of abnormal child psychology*, 40(5), 771-785.
- Hyatt, J. M., & Barnes, G. C. (2017). An experimental evaluation of the impact of intensive supervision on the recidivism of high-risk probationers. *Crime & Delinquency*, 63(1), 3-38.

- Intravia, J., Gibbs, B. R., Wolff, K. T., Paez, R., Bernheimer, A., & Piquero, A. R. (2018). The mediating role of street code attitudes on the self-control and crime relationship. *Deviant Behavior*, 39(10), 1305-1321.
- Kaebler, D. (2018). *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2016*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus16.pdf>
- Kaebler, D., Cowhig, M., (2018). *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf>
- Kornhauser, R. R. (1978). *Social sources of delinquency: An appraisal of analytical models*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- LaGrange, T. C., & Silverman, R. A. (1999). Low self-control and opportunity: Testing the general theory of crime as an explanation for gender differences in delinquency. *Criminology*, 37(1), 41-72.
- Lane, J., Turner, S., Fain, T., & Sehgal, A. (2005). Evaluating an experimental intensive juvenile probation program: Supervision and official outcomes. *Crime & Delinquency*, 51(1), 26-52.
- Latessa, E.J., Cullen, F.T., & Gendreau, P. (2002). Beyond correctional quackery- Professionalism and the possibility of effective treatment. *Federal Probation*, 66, 43.
- Latessa, E. J., Lemke, R., Makarios, M., & Smith, P. (2010). The creation and validation of the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS). *Fed. Probation*, 74, 16.
- Latessa, E. J., & Lovins, B. (2010). The role of offender risk assessment: A policy maker guide. *Victims and Offenders*, 5(3), 203-219.
- Laub, J. H., Nagin, D. S., & Sampson, R. J. (1998). Trajectories of change in criminal offending: Good marriages and the desistance process. *American sociological review*, 225-238.
- Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (1993). Turning points in the life course: Why change matters to the study of crime. *Criminology*, 31(3), 301-325.
- Laub, J. H., Sampson, R. J., & Sweeten, G. A. (2017). Assessing Sampson and Laub's Life-Course Theory of Crime. *Taking Stock: The Status of Criminological Theory*, 313.
- Legislative Budget Board (2019). Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates. Retrieved from http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/documents/publications/policy_report/4914_recidivism_revocation_rates_jan2019.pdf

- Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. J. (2002). *Evaluation of Ohio's community based correctional facilities and halfway house programs*. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, Division of Criminal Justice, Center for Criminal Justice Research.
- Luong, D., & Wormith, J. S. (2011). Applying risk/need assessment to probation practice and its impact on the recidivism of young offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38(12), 1177-1199.
- Martinson, R. (1974). What works?-Questions and answers about prison reform. *The public interest*, 35, 22.
- Matsueda, R. L. (1992). Reflected appraisals, parental labeling, and delinquency: Specifying a symbolic interactionist theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(6), 1577-1611.
- Mead, B. (1937). Is there a measure of probation success? *Federal Probation*, 69, 3.
- Morgan, K.D. (1994). Factors associated with probation outcome. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 22(4), 341-353.
- Morgan, K. D. (1995). Variables associated with successful probation completion. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 22(3-4), 141-153.
- Nofziger, S., & Newton, K. (2018). Self-control, parental crime, and discipline across three generations. *Deviant Behavior*, 39(12), 1533-1551.
- Petersilia, J., Turner, S., Kahan, J., & Peterson, J. (1985). Executive summary of Rand's study, "Granting felons probation: Public risks and alternatives". *Crime & Delinquency*, 31(3), 379-392.
- Pratt, T.C., & Cullen, F.T. (2000). The empirical status of Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime: A meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 38, 931-964.
- Pratt, T. C., Turanovic, J. J., Fox, K. A., & Wright, K. A. (2014). Self-control and victimization: A meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 52(1), 87-116.
- Rhoades, K. A., Leve, L. D., Eddy, J. M., & Chamberlain, P. (2016). Predicting the transition from juvenile delinquency to adult criminality: Gender-specific influences in two high-risk samples. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 26(5), 336-351.
- Rochford, B. (2013). Using Risk and Need Assessments to Reduce Recidivism. *Corrections Today*, 75(4), 6.
- Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (1990). Crime and deviance over the life course: The salience of adult social bonds. *American sociological review*, 609-627.

- Sampson, R. J., Laub, J. H., & Wimer, C. (2006). Does marriage reduce crime? A counterfactual approach to within-individual causal effects. *Criminology*, 44(3), 465-508.
- Sampson, R.J., Raudenbush, S.W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277(5328), 918-924.
- Schreck, C. J., Stewart, E. A., & Fisher, B. S. (2006). Self-control, victimization, and their influence on risky lifestyles: A longitudinal analysis using panel data. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 22(4), 319-340.
- Shaw, C.R., & McKay, H.D. (1942). Juvenile delinquency and urban areas. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Sims, B., & Jones, M. (1997). Predicting success or failure on probation: Factors associated with felony probation outcomes. *Crime & Delinquency*, 43(3), 314-327.
- TenEyck, M., & Barnes, J. C. (2018). Exploring the social and individual differences among victims, offenders, victim-offenders, and total abstainers. *Victims & Offenders*, 13(1), 66-83.
- Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Art. 42A. (2015). Retrieved from: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.42A.htm>
- Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (2010). Retrieved from: <https://www.texasajc.org/system/files/publications/HB%201205%20Implementation%20Brief%20%28Sep%202011%29.pdf>
- Thielo, A. J., Cullen, F. T., Cohen, D. M., & Chouhy, C. (2016). Rehabilitation in a red state: Public support for correctional reform in Texas. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 15(1), 137-170.
- Thoits, P. A. (1995). Stress, coping, and social support processes: Where are we? What next?. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 53-79.
- Tittle, C. R., Ward, D. A., & Grasmick, H. G. (2003). Self-control and crime/deviance: Cognitive vs. behavioral measures. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 19(4), 333-365.
- United States Census Bureau (2018). Quick Facts. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/TX/RHI125218?>
- VanBenschoten, S. (2008). Risk/needs assessment: Is this the best we can do. *Federal Probation*, 72, 38.
- Vazsonyi, A. T., & Huang, L. (2010). Where self-control comes from: On the development of self-control and its relationship to deviance over time. *Developmental psychology*, 46(1), 245.

- Watts, S. J., & Iratzoqui, A. (2019). Unraveling the Relationships between Low Self-Control, Substance Use, Substance-Using Peers, and Violent Victimization. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 44(6), 979-997.
- Will, J. A., & McGrath, J. H. (1995). Crime, neighborhood perceptions, and the underclass: The relationship between fear of crime and class position. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 23(2), 163-176.
- Williams, R. (2019). Analyzing rare events with logistic regression. Retrieved from <https://www3.nd.edu/~rwilliam/stats3/RareEvents.pdf>
- Wolfe, S. E., Reisig, M. D., & Holtfreter, K. (2016). Low self-control and crime in late adulthood. *Research on Aging*, 38(7), 767-790.
- Wong, S. C., & Gordon, A. (2006). The validity and reliability of the Violence Risk Scale: A treatment-friendly violence risk assessment tool. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 12(3), 279.
- Woo, Y., Stohr, M. K., Hemmens, C., Lutze, F., Hamilton, Z., & Yoon, O. K. (2016). An empirical test of the social support paradigm on male inmate society. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 40(2), 145-169.
- Wright, B. R. E., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., & Silva, P. A. (1999). Low self-control, social bonds, and crime: Social causation, social selection, or both? *Criminology*, 37(3), 479-514.
- Wright, J. P., Cullen, F. T., & Wooldredge, J. D. (2000). Parental support and juvenile delinquency. *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*, 2, 139-161.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (n=2,069)

	Mean	SD	Min.	Max
Early Dismissal	0.19	0.39	0	1
Offense Type	1.90	1.90	0	5
Offense Level	2.82	1.32	1	4
Total Risk Score	26.84	6.53	1	44
Total Risk Level	2.32	0.81	1	4
Criminal Attitudes	8.33	1.92	1	12
Criminal History	7.10	1.67	1	9
Employment and Education	3.83	1.69	1	7
Family and Social Support	3.55	1.17	1	5
Neighborhood	2.49	0.80	1	3
Delinquent Peers	5.82	1.89	1	9
Substance Use	4.72	1.87	1	8
Age	30.88	10.55	17	83
Male	0.68	0.46	0	1
Black	0.30	0.46	0	1
Hispanic	0.24	0.43	0	1

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 2. Logistic Regression of Early Release on Legal, Nonlegal, and TRAS Covariates (n=2,069)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Legal Variables</i>								
Offense Type	1.01	(0.03)	----	----	0.96	(0.03)	1.02	(0.03)
Offense Level	1.03	(0.04)	----	----	1.03	(0.05)	0.10	(0.05)
<i>TRAS Variables</i>								
Overall Risk Score	----	----	1.11	(0.03)	1.11	(0.03)	----	----
Overall Risk Level	----	----	0.85*	(0.16)	0.86*	(0.16)	----	----
Criminal Attitudes	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.00	(0.04)
Criminal History	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.27*	(0.05)
Employment and Education	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.28*	(0.05)
Family and Social Support	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.05	(0.06)
Neighborhood	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.17	(0.10)
Delinquent Peers	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.06	(0.04)
Substance Use	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.96	(0.04)
<i>Nonlegal Variables</i>								
Age	1.02	(0.01)	1.01	(0.03)	1.01	(0.01)	1.02	(0.01)
Male	0.89*	(0.11)	0.86*	(0.11)	0.86*	(0.11)	0.86*	(0.11)
Black	0.69*	(0.10)	0.65*	(0.09)	0.67*	(0.10)	0.73*	(0.11)
Hispanic	0.98	(0.14)	0.89	(0.13)	0.90	(0.13)	0.93	(0.14)

* $p < .05$; Note: OR = Odds Ratio; SE = Standard Error