Quality of Co-Parent Relationship and Father Involvement with their Children
in Men with Criminal Records

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Abstract

This dissertation tests a hypothesized correlation between relationship quality and father involvement for unmarried fathers who have a criminal record. Additionally, this dissertation explores how relationship quality mediates or moderates the relationship between the father's criminal conviction and level of involvement with children. Criminal conviction was measured in four ways: 1) any conviction record (yes/no), 2) total number of any convictions, 3) felony conviction record (yes/no), and 4) total number of felony convictions. In addition to criminal convictions, a number of covariates were analyzed in the models. Methodologically, this study consists of a secondary analysis of pre-survey and criminal history data from the Hennepin County Co-Parent Court Evaluation. Quantitative analyses of correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to address the hypotheses. Results show a correlation between the quality of the father's relationship with the co-parent and the level of involvement with their children, measured as "relationship quality" and "father involvement." However, there is not a correlation between criminal convictions and relationship quality or father involvement. Additional findings demonstrate the persistent relationship between covariates related to criminal convictions, relationship quality, and father involvement.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

      This dissertation explores the relationship between the quality of unmarried co-parents' relationship and the level of involvement fathers have with their children, with a specific focus on men who have a criminal record. In doing so, this study offers unique insight into connections between parenting and the criminal justice system. To explore these relationships, secondary programmatic survey data from the Hennepin County Co-Parent Project and administrative data on the father's criminal history were analyzed. Research has documented how involvement in the criminal justice system impacts the quality of co-parents relationships, which in turn can impact fathers' involvement with their children. Yet virtually no previous research has explored the intersection of criminal history on co-parent relationship quality and father involvement.

      The first section of this dissertation consists of a literature review that backgrounds the research problem and provides a theoretical orientation. The second section presents the research questions, hypotheses, and the methods. The final section reports study results, limitations, and closes with a discussion of the implications of this work.

Definitions of Terms

Relationship Quality: measured by supportiveness (Carlson & McLanahan, 2006) and level of conflict, and cooperation (Waldfogel, Craigie, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010).

Supportiveness: measured in survey items as reports of encouraging, helping the other parent, ability to comprise and showing love and affection (Carlson, McLanahan, England, & Devaney, 2005).

Negative relationship quality: measured by conflict and violence (McLanahan & Beck, 2010).

Father involvement: typically measured with multiple dimensions that include one-to-one interactions with children, time spent one-to-one, accessibility of the father, demonstrated concern for their children and making sure the child is cared for (Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012).

Criminal conviction: For this analysis, four separate levels are utilized: 1) any type of conviction record, including felony, gross misdemeanor, and misdemeanor (yes/no); 2) total number of convictions including felony, gross misdemeanor, and misdemeanor; 3) felony conviction record; and 4) total number of felony conviction records.

Collateral consequences: legal sanctions or barriers that result from having a criminal record.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The central hypotheses in this dissertation test the extent to which criminal convictions impact relationship quality with co-parents and paternal involvement. In other words, this research asks: among low-income, unmarried co-parents, do fathers with a criminal conviction have less involvement with their children than those fathers without a criminal conviction? Additionally, how does the father's relationship with the mother change this pattern?

Research has shown the benefits of father involvement on children. For low income unmarried parents, father involvement may be limited for a variety of reasons, such as unmarried co-parents living in different cities or states, multiple partner fertility, or a poor relationship quality between co-parents (Edin, 2000). Research has demonstrated that relationship quality between unmarried co-parents can impact father involvement (Guzzo, 2009). Relationship quality can be determined by several factors, including how long parents have been in a relationship prior to the birth of their child, trust, supportiveness between parents, and financial contributions (Gibson-Davis, 2007). Limited prior research has also illustrated how relationship quality and father involvement are impacted by incarceration due to issues of maternal gatekeeping and conflict due to unmarried co-parents' previous intimate relationships (Turney, 2014).

However, little is known about how a criminal conviction, regardless of incarceration, impacts relationship quality and father involvement in low income, unmarried parents. To adequately frame potential correlations between relationship quality and father involvement with men who have a criminal conviction, the first section

of this literature review explores what is known in regards to relationship quality and father involvement for unmarried parents and addresses central themes in the literature as they relate broadly to relationship quality and father involvement in unmarried parents. The second section focuses on how relationship quality and father involvement is impacted by criminal justice contact, focusing mainly on incarceration. The third section introduces a theoretical framework for studying this issue. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of gaps in the current literature that motivate the present study.

Part I: Relationship Quality and Father Involvement

Low income unmarried parents are typically younger parents in early adulthood and are disproportionately from communities-of-color. Most low-income parents have also never been married (Carlson & Hognas, 2010). Studies of relationship quality and father involvement in unmarried, low income parents typically use the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study data managed by Princeton University. This dataset is comprised of approximately 5,000 children born in the United States between 1998 and 2000, and their parents. It is a longitudinal study following families over time. About three-quarter of the children in this dataset were born to unmarried parents (The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Website). These families are considered "fragile" because the parents are often unmarried, at greater risk for breaking up, and more likely to live in poverty (The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Website). Surveys and interviews were conducted with both mothers and fathers at the birth of the child and when the child turned ages one, three, and five. Along with the interviews, assessments of children and

of their home environments were completed at ages three and five. According to the study website, attrition remained fairly low throughout the study period.

Types of Relationship Status

Relationship status is defined in numerous ways. Unmarried parents may cohabitate, remain romantically involved but live apart, or are simply co-parents with no romantic involvement. Finally some parents are no longer romantically involved, but continue to cohabitate (often because of financial reasons). Unmarried parents may cycle in and out of relationship statuses over a period of time, and may even repeat these cycles for many years until they eventually marry or permanently separate (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008). Yet, relationship quality is a factor that underlies all unmarried parents' decision to marry or even stay together (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008) and a persistent primary factor in determining if low-income unmarried parents are ready for marriage is if both partners feel that the relationship is of high enough quality that it is suitable for marriage (Gibson-Davis, Edin, & McLanahan, 2005).

A number of factors may influence relationship quality between low income unmarried parents. Some of the factors that are the greatest challenge in low income unmarried parents include: multiple partner fertility, financial stress, domestic violence, and a criminal record. To compound this, a criminal record may also cause barriers to employment and housing. Understanding relationship statuses or trajectories is important when examining relationship quality and father involvement in low-income unmarried parents. By operationalizing relationship status over trajectories, researchers can

understand how some unmarried parents interact with each other over time and throughout different circumstances – and ultimately, how relationship quality plays a role in these interactions (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008).

Relationship Quality

Low-income unmarried parents deal with a great deal of stress that strains relationships and affects the quality of relationships between unmarried parents. Recent research has begun to explore the impact that relationship quality between unmarried parents has on involvement with children. Relationship quality is defined by supportiveness (Carlson & McLanahan, 2006) and by levels of conflict and cooperation (Waldfogel, Craigie, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). Supportiveness is defined as encouraging, helping the other parent, ability to comprise and showing love and affection (Carlson et. al., 2005). Negative relationship quality is often measured by conflict and violence (McLanahan & Beck, 2010). Understanding relationship quality in low income unmarried parents is important because it can impact the co-parenting relationship between parents which will ultimately impact child well-being and stability. Relationship quality between unmarried parents often determines the role and relationship one parent will have with their children. In fact, one study found relationship quality between the parents to be the strongest predictor to whether a father is involved with his children (Johnson, 2001). Relationship quality between couples particularly affects the non-resident parent and in most cases that is the father.

Father Involvement

Previous research suggests that children benefit from the presence of both parents. Fathers uniquely contribute to their children's healthy development in ways that are different than mothers (Menestrel, 1999). Father involvement may not be beneficial for every child or for every situation, particularly for fathers who are violent or abusive. For the most part, though, paternal involvement is of benefit to the child. Father involvement protects children from negative behaviors such as delinquency, truancy, substance abuse, and acting out behaviors (Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, & Miller, 2000). Children with involved fathers also grow up with higher self-esteem and increased cognitive capacities, such as higher verbal skills (Pruett, 2000). In contrast, children from father-absent homes are more likely to struggle at school and repeat a grade (Nord & West, 2001). Regardless of daily contact, fathers provide psychological significance in their children's lives (McHale, Kuersten-Hogan, & Rao, 2004). Finally, though it is difficult if a father is incarcerated, research has demonstrated that fathers with a criminal record still believe that their involvement in their children's lives has a positive dynamic for their children (Smoyer, Blankenship, MacIntosh, 2010).

Fathers who are involved in the lives of their children also receive benefits. They tend to have lower levels of substance abuse, less contact with the criminal justice system, and are more likely to participate in the community and serve in civic or community leadership roles (Palm, 1993). Despite the benefits of father involvement, differences in involvement between married and unmarried parents exist: Because relationship quality may impact parental involvement, some children may be at risk for

growing up without psychological and social supports that fathers provide (Menestrel, 1999). Father involvement is typically measured with multiple dimensions that include one-to-one interactions with children, time spent one-to-one, accessibility of the father, demonstrated concern for their children and making sure the child is cared for (Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012). In the simplest form, father involvement is measured by accessibility, engagement, and responsibility to their children (Pleck, 2012).

Relationship Quality & Co-Parenting

When unmarried parents are romantically involved or have a positive relationship, there is often increased motivation to co-parent together, whereas when they are not involved or getting along, barriers to co-parenting tend to emerge (Fagan & Palkovitz, 2011). For some, parenting and partnering go hand in hand. When a father has a good relationship with the child's mother, he is more likely to be involved and spend time with the child. This involvement leads to the child being psychologically and emotionally healthier (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006).

Conversely, when poor relationship quality exists between unmarried parents, they report less involvement and co-parenting support (Dush, Kotila, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011). For non-resident parents, romantic involvement is seen as critical because romantically involved parents may be more motivated to engage in co-parenting relationships than non-romantically involved parents. For instance, a study of low-income fathers found that romantic involvement between unmarried parents is an important to father engagement (Fagan & Palkovitz, 2011).

Many parents are romantically involved at the time of the child's birth (Edin, England, Fitzgibbons-Shafer, & Reed, 2010). This immediate period following the birth is often described as a "magical moment" for parents. Parents typically have positive feelings about the relationship and are hopeful for the relationship's future (Howard & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). The magical moment may, however, dissolve rather quickly and continue to dissolve as the child ages. Studies on unmarried parents using the Fragile Families data found at their children's birth, 50% of the couples were romantically involved and cohabitating and another 32% were not living together but considered themselves romantically involved (McLanahan, 2011). Five years after the birth, however, only 35% of the unmarried parents were still living together and less than half of those couples were married (McLanahan, 2011).

During the "magical moment," both mothers and fathers have high expectations about the father's involvement with the child. A study that surveyed unwed parents immediately following the birth of their child (and included cohabitating and non-cohabitating couples) found that 93% of mothers and 100% of fathers wanted the father to be involved in raising the baby. Eighty-two percent of mothers and 85% of fathers also reported that the father promised to provide financial support (Johnson, 2001). An important finding of this study was that relationship status appeared to be an important indicator of a father's involvement (Johnson, 2001). Relationship status is different from relationship quality but they are often correlated. When relationship quality is poor, the relationship status between the unmarried parents is typically "not together." But, when relationship quality is high, the unmarried parents are more likely to describe themselves

as "together." In some cases, couples continue to stay in a low quality relationship in order to be involved with their children. For instance, one study of fathers found that a sample of fathers considered returning to a former partner or staying with a partner where there was a great deal of conflict in order to remain involved in their children lives (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008). Yet, for many states, institutional interventions are not in place for unmarried parents. Specifically, most states have no mandates for unmarried parents to enter family court when the relationship ends, unlike divorcing couples (Carlson & Hognas, 2011). If unmarried parents do enter family court, it is most often to establish financial child support (Dush, Kotila, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011). So, one parent may feel the need to stay in a poor relationship in order to have legal access to and full involvement with their children.

Economic Stability and Relationship Quality

Economic stability is also an important determining factor of relationship quality among unmarried parents, and a predictive factor for if unmarried parents will eventually marry. A 2007 study by Gibson-Davis sought to understand the economic barriers that prevent low-income couples from getting married, as well as whether improvements in the financial circumstances in couples increased their decision to marry. Results showed that romantically involved unmarried parents feel that, in addition to emotional preparedness, couples must have a certain level of economic stability before getting married (Gibson-Davis, 2007).

The unique methodological approach for this study is worth highlighting. Gibson-Davis used the Time, Love, Cash, Care, and Children (TLC3) sample of unmarried couples (N = 47 couples). The TLC3 is a qualitative dataset often used when examining parenting and relationship quality in low-income families. Interviews were conducted with married and unmarried parents who experienced a birth in 2000. It is subset of qualitative interviews that were sampled based on the stratified, random sampling scheme from the quantitative Fragile Families Study and sampled participants from Chicago, New York, and Milwaukee. Mothers and fathers were involved in semi-structured interviews both individually and as a couple.

Data collection occurred in four waves between 2000 and 2005. Mothers and fathers were asked questions regarding their parenting behaviors, their views on parenting, and their child-rearing practices. Questions also centered on their family structures and their relationships with the other parent. Participants were asked the amount of time they spend with the other parent, their thoughts on the future of their relationship with the other parent, and their views on marriage (England & Edin, 2007). Attrition rates were similar to those seen in for Fragile Families surveys. Results demonstrated that employment among both partners was found to be a prerequisite for marriage because economic instability or reliance on welfare was seen as not being prepared for marriage (2007).

Understanding the role that economic stability, employment, and ultimately financial contributions have on unmarried couples is important because this shapes the co-parent relationship in profound ways and is essential for the analyses in this

dissertation. Mothers are more likely to feel they would marry their child's father if he was employed (Waller, 2001), and unemployed fathers are at greater risk for not seeing their children (Guzzo, 2009). Another study demonstrated that while most fathers report it was important to them to financially contribute to their children, they often found it difficult to do so (Magnuson & Gibson-Davis, 2007). Those who were able to make the largest contributions to their non-custodial children were those most tied to the labor market and had higher earnings as well as formal child support orders (Magnuson & Gibson-Davis, 2007). Fathers who cannot contribute financially to their children may withdraw from their lives as they may feel they are not able to serve the provider role.

Another study by Classens (2007) used TLC3 interview data from a sample of 18 recently-separated couples. Interview transcripts were coded for reports of: 1) mother's report of time since father last visit, 2) father's report of time since last visit, 3) mother's report of gate keeping, and 4) father's report of gate keeping. Gate keeping was defined or measured as the father or mother controlling access to the focal child (Classens, 2007). A key finding was that mothers restrict father's access to children when they are not financially contributing (Classens, 2007).

Fathers who were not able to make formal support arrangements may provide informal supports. These are often obtained through illegal measures and are given to mothers more inconsistently than formal arrangements (Magnuson & Gibson-Davis, 2007). Informal supports were also fewer amounts than formal supports and could include money or goods. Informal supports are sometimes viewed by the mothers as

fathers not taking full responsibility and became frustrated by the unreliable assistance (Magnuson & Gibson-Davis, 2007).

Relationship status and quality were determined as significant influences on if fathers were able to financially contribute to the mother during the pregnancy (Johnson, 2001). Cohabitating romantically involved fathers were 2.4 to 16.7 times more likely to provide financial support to the mother during pregnancy than fathers who were in non-romantic relationships with the mother (Johnson, 2001). Once the child is born, research has shown that a father's financial contribution increases the relationship quality between parents as well as increases the father's time spent with the child (Laasko, 2004).

Conversely, increases in fathers' involvement and contact with their child may lead to greater financial contributions. Fathers who visit their children consistently may be more aware of their economic needs and therefore increase support (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010). Men also reported that financially supporting their children contributed to healthier relationships with their children's mother (Young and Holcomb, 2007).

Overall, this body of research illustrates how economic factors impact relationship quality among low income unmarried parents, which in turn impacts father involvement. As a result, this research also points to the potential benefit to children and fathers if the co-parent relationship is improved. Before improvements can be made, however, we must understand factors that contribute to low relationship quality. In sum, a number of other factors may impact relationship quality: age of child, race, education level, and neighborhood factors (Moore, Kinghorn, & Bandy, 2011; Sterrett, Jones, Forehand, & Garai, 2010).

This dissertation moves beyond those factors and specifically focused on how a father's criminal conviction impacted his relationship with the mother of his children. This is important research because few studies have addressed this issue yet the prevalence of criminal convictions among low-income fathers is disproportionately high. The next section describes the broad impact of the criminal justice system on this population.

Part II: Families and Criminal Justice Involvement

Understanding the effect of incarceration on low-income, unmarried couples' relationship quality is important primarily because of the sheer number of low-income families that are impacted by the criminal justice system and because of the documented detrimental effect of incarceration on family relationships. A study using Fragile Families data found that one-third of cohabiting fathers and 42% of non-resident (but visiting fathers) had been incarcerated at some point their lives (Carlson et. al., 2005). Incarceration severely impacts relationship quality between co-parents and increases the risk for separation and divorce (Wildeman & Western, 2010). Marriage rates are low for men in prison, especially for African American men. While overall marriage rates for African Americans are at 25%, it is even lower for young African American inmates at just 11% (Western, 2004). Despite the low marriage rates, many inmates have children. Black children are almost eight times more likely than white children and three times more likely than Hispanic children to have a parent in prison (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008).

Incarceration puts stable and secure relationships at risk (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008). When incarcerated African American males are married or involved in serious monogamous relationships, those relationships are subjected to a great deal of stress. Questions of infidelity arise during the period of separation and may cause conflict between the partners (King, 1993). Parental incarceration significantly impacts relationship quality between the unmarried parents. It is difficult to have an intimate or co-parenting relationship from prison; barriers to contact and communication make maintaining intimacy and commitment difficult (Herman-Stahl, Kan, & McKay, 2008).

The difficulties caused by incarceration may also continue upon the father's release. Stigma may follow these men and women may have concerns about getting involved again with their formerly incarcerated partner. A study using Fragile Families data compared marriage and cohabitation rates among incarcerated and never-incarcerated fathers. For previously incarcerated fathers, marriage or cohabitation with the mother of their children is less likely 12 months after the birth of a child, compared to fathers who have never been incarcerated (Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2004). This could be because mothers view previously incarcerated fathers as "risky partners" (Roy, Buckmiller, & Dowell, 2008; Edin & Kefelas, 2007). The stigma of incarceration may also make some mothers hesitant to marry or cohabitate with their children's father (Edin, 2000).

Because of the separation and distance, incarceration is detrimental for even the most intact couples (Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2004). However, those in romantic relationships with the incarcerated father may be more motivated to continue contact between the child and their incarcerated father. One study found that when a mother maintained a romantic relationship with the other incarcerated parent, this increased annual days of contact by an average of nine days (Swisher & Waller, 2008). This study by Swisher and Waller analyzed data for non-resident fathers from three waves of the Fragile Families data. This included 1,002 non-resident fathers who were African American, White, and Latino. Even though the focus was on contact and involvement in non-resident fathers, data was analyzed based on the mothers report, because they were more likely to participate in all stages of the study and less likely to drop out. Results

shouls that current incarceration interfered with establishing informal agreements between the parents (Swisher & Waller, 2008). Another study of men on probation and parole found that even though many men in the sample reported that they lived with their children, it was only for short periods of time, often disrupted by the end of the relationship with the mother, or being sent back to prison (Smoyer, Blankenship, MacIntosh, 2010).

Regardless of relationship status, there is strong evidence that illustrates the strain that incarceration has on family stability and a parents' ability to economically contribute to their child (Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, & Mincy, 2009). Formal or informal agreements for child support are often influenced by incarceration (Swisher & Waller, 2008). Incarceration also impacts the financial contributions of fathers, which are already limited for many of these families (Lerman, 2010). In other words, "effects of incarceration on the family and community are entangled with the issues of employment" (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; p134). A fathers' incarceration is likely to limit employment opportunities. Previously incarcerated fathers also provide less cash support contributions to families because they were not able to find employment and due to lower wages and earnings upon their release when they did find a job (Geller, Irwin, Cooper, & Ronald, 2009). Overall, many studies document the detrimental effects of incarceration on long-term employment prospects and earning over a life course (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999).

The stress caused by incarceration no doubt impacts relationship quality between unmarried parents. Overall, studies have found incarceration significantly reduces relationship quality, not only due to the incarceration itself, but also because of the

limited employment opportunities and stigmas newly released prisoners face. This, in turn, contributes to unstable co-parenting unions (Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2004) and leads to a decrease in father engagement (Woldoff & Washington, 2008). Stable relationships with children among incarcerated or previously incarcerated fathers appear to be quite rare (Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2004). For some mothers, the criminal history or incarceration is a reason to sever their own relationship with the father as well as the relationship between the father and child (Woldoff & Washington, 2008).

Criminal Justice Involvement – Outside of Incarceration

While much of the current literature specifically focuses on the effect of incarceration on families, relative few studies focus on the *broader* impact of criminal records and criminal histories on family relationships. Millions of individuals have criminal records that consist only of low level, misdemeanor offenses and never go to prison. It has also been widely documented that low-income, males of color are more likely to be under some form of correctional control (arrested, incarcerated, or on probation or parole): thirty percent all individuals on probation in the United States are African American (Glaze & Bonczar, 2011). Over half of the individuals on probation are because of low level convictions; 28% are property offenses and another 26% are for drug offenses (Glaze & Bonczar, 2011). Little research has examined how this more common, but less severe, involvement in the criminal justice system impacts relationship quality and father involvement. One study on a sample of men who were on probation or parole found that probation and parole was a critical aspect that shaped the context for

how they fathered and their ability to meet the demands of fathering (Smoyer,

Blankenship, & MacIntosh, 2010). The men, through qualitative interviews, described the

challenges they faced to balancing the demands and restrictions of their community

supervision and the demands of providing financially for their children as well as finding

time to spend with their children (Smoyer, Blankenship, MacIntosh, 2010).

An ethnographic study conducted by Goffman (2009) studied the lives of low

income men with arrest warrants living in Philadelphia. She examined how the continual

stress of being "wanted" impacted their relationships with their families. Goffman (2009)

spent 6 years in poor neighborhoods of Philadelphia, living and interacting daily with her

research participants. The researcher saw firsthand the toll of living with warrant and the

toll "being wanted" by the criminal justice system had on the lives of the men. The

quality of relationships between fathers with warrants and their children's' mother were

often strained. Goffman (2009) writes,

> The fact that some young men may be taken into custody if they encounter
>
> the authorities is a background expectation of everyday interactions in this
>
> community. It is a starting principle, central to understanding young men's
>
> relations to family and friends as well as the reciprocal lines of action
>
> between them (p. 344).

This quote illustrates the stress of being on the run on family relationships. It is a constant

presence in their lives and a constant worry that any day or minute they could be arrested.

For instance, their families are constantly threatened by the police, leading to the fear that

if they do not "give up" the men, they themselves could face incarceration. Goffman

(2009) also witnessed times when men were at the hospital for the birth of their child and law enforcement officers checked hospital visiting logs to see if any of the visitors had warrants and witnessed new fathers being arrested at the hospital because of outstanding warrants. These stories spread in the Philadelphia community, and because of this, fathers avoided going to the hospital for the birth of their children. Some men also avoided going to their child's school gatherings for fear they would be arrested.

Goffman's research also suggested that the other co-parent may use the warrant as a way to threaten the father. She illustrates one case where a mother threatened to call her co-parent's probation officer on the father as way to keep the father inside at nights. Another father was fighting with his children's mother and she stopped allowing him to see his two daughters. This father decided to take the mother to court. When he went to court, the mother told the court that he was a drug dealer and not fit to be granted partial custody. This father had also recently lost his job and stopped making payments towards a ticket. The judge ran his name to see if he had any warrants. At that time, he did not. However, mothers may have more power over fathers who have a criminal record. Concerns with the court may prevent fathers with a criminal record from becoming fully involved or seeking custody.

Threats used by their children's mothers to call the police may also make fathers stay away or uninvolved. Goffman (2009) illustrated several examples were girlfriends and/or their children's mother used the court system and probation as a way to get back at the men. This ethnographic study provides a comprehensive examination of how men with warrants can alter relationship quality with their children's mothers and how father

involvement was impacted beyond incarceration. As Goffman (2009) states, "The presence of the criminal justice system in the lives of the poor cannot simply be measured by the number of people sent to prison or the number of people who return home with felony convictions" (353). It is important to look at relationship quality and father involvement in criminal records and histories, regardless of incarceration, such as in this study.

Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records

Research has illustrated that having a criminal record creates many barriers, such as difficulty finding employment (Pager, 2007) and housing. Fathers with criminal records also have difficulty paying child support (Swank, 2003). These barriers may further damage fathers' relationships between the other parent and their children. These barriers are often referred to as collateral consequences, or "legal sanctions and restrictions imposed upon people with a criminal record" (American Bar Association 2014). Collateral consequences may include not being able to rent a house, not getting a child or foster care license, being locked out of employment opportunities, and/or not being able to vote all because of a criminal record. It is difficult for fathers to care and provide for their children when they cannot obtain their basic needs because of their criminal record.

Collateral consequences also affect people long after their sentences have been served. They make it difficult for people to move on and change their lives around. Collateral consequences even affect individuals who have only been arrested, and never

convicted or even charged with an offense. As illustrated above, economic stability can impact relationship quality and father involvement and because of the negative effects of criminal records on obtaining employment, it is even more important to explore the potential correlations between criminal records and relationship quality and ultimately father involvement. This is particularly important, as relatively little research has focused on the implications of collateral consequences on children and overall families (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999).

Characteristics of those with Criminal Records

The stigma and collateral consequences of a criminal record may impact relationship quality and father involvement. Individuals involved in criminal activity may be impulsive, may have issues with substance abuse (Lattimore, MacDonald, Piquerom Linster, & Visher, 2004), tend to be younger (Sampson & Laub, 2003), and have lower levels of education. These same characteristics may also lead men in this population to become poor partners, co-parents and fathers. This perspective argues that it may be the characteristics of individuals with criminal records that impact relationship quality, and not only the stigma and collateral consequences of the criminal record alone. This is a valid argument, yet this dissertation aims to measure the effect of criminal justice contact on parenting. To address this issue of potential self-selection, educational level and age are used as control variables in the forthcoming analysis.

Part III: Human Ecological Theory

Theoretically, this study is grounded in human ecological theory. Ecological theories in human development focus on people (often referred to as "developing persons") and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 94). This theory is commonly used in social work because it focuses on the interaction of individuals and their environments, which are important foundations of social work. A reason for choosing the human ecological theory is that it allows us to understand how individuals both influenced by and further influence their environments. This approach is important for this study, as any observed effects may be driven by the lasting environmental conditions (referred to above as collateral consequences and stigma) that make it difficult for them to reintegrate back into society. With a human ecological theory, we can understand the impacts of social policies (in this case collateral consequences) on individuals and communities.

Human Ecological Theory & Current Research

Human ecological theory was first developed in the 1960's and 70's using principles from other theories including (but not limited to) ecology, ethology, ego psychology, stress theory, general systems theory, and anthropology (Greene, 2008). Human ecology theory is concerned with the impact of environments on individuals and the impact of individuals on their environments. A basic assumption is that individuals and their environments are inseparable and they have to be considered together (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The dissertation considered the collateral consequences of a father's criminal conviction that may have made it difficult for them to provide for their

family and may have impacted relationship quality and father involvement. In this case, the specific focus is on how policies developed in the larger environment might impact the individual father and his relationship with others. While children are often the focal point of researchers and practitioners who use human ecological theory (Rosa & Tudge, 2013), this empirical approach places the father as focal. In doing so, this work shifts concern to how the father with a criminal conviction interacts with in himself and his environment.

Ecosystem

Human ecological theory focuses on ecosystem models. Bronfennbenner identified five systems that are part of the ecosystem: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The ecosystem illustrates how the individual and environment interact with one another.

Microsystem is the first level or ring of the system. The microsystem is the individual, interpersonal level of the father. Routine activities and relationships of the father and within his immediate environment occur in this system. Examples could include home, school, or workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Mesosystem is the second level; it is inter-relations of the developing person within 2 or more settings. It is essentially the tie between systems. In unmarried fathers the mesosystem could be relationships connecting his home and the home of his children and co-parent.

Exosystem is the third level and includes environments that do not directly involve the father. The father does not actively participate in these environments, but the activities that occur in these environments still impact him. An example of this would be legislatures who make policies that impact people with criminal records or employers who create policies not to hire people with criminal records.

Macrosystem, the fourth level, consists of sociological norms, cultural values and influences within in the larger environment in which the developing person belongs. According Bronfrenbenner, macrosystems are "blueprints" that guide behavior of people within the same social environment. Driven by societal values and cultural norms, individuals with a criminal record are stigmatized throughout society. Collateral consequences are also present in every state. Sometimes blueprints are developed from laws or rules, but most of the time they are developed informally.

Chronosystem is the fifth and final level. Chronosystems were not a part of the original ecosystem developed by Bronfrenbenner but were developed in later stages. Chronosystems deal with changes that influence the developing person within their environment, such as major life transitions that change how a person interacts with their environment. These may be changes within the external environment or they could be internal changes within the developing person (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Examples of changes or transitions related to the dissertation may be the first time a father was involved in crime or arrested, or changes in laws related to the rights of unmarried fathers. These five interrelated systems are the foundation of the human ecological theory. It is often depicted using the model below.

Diagram: concentric circles labeled from outer to inner: Chrono-systems, Macrosystem, Exosystems, Mesosystems, Microsystems.

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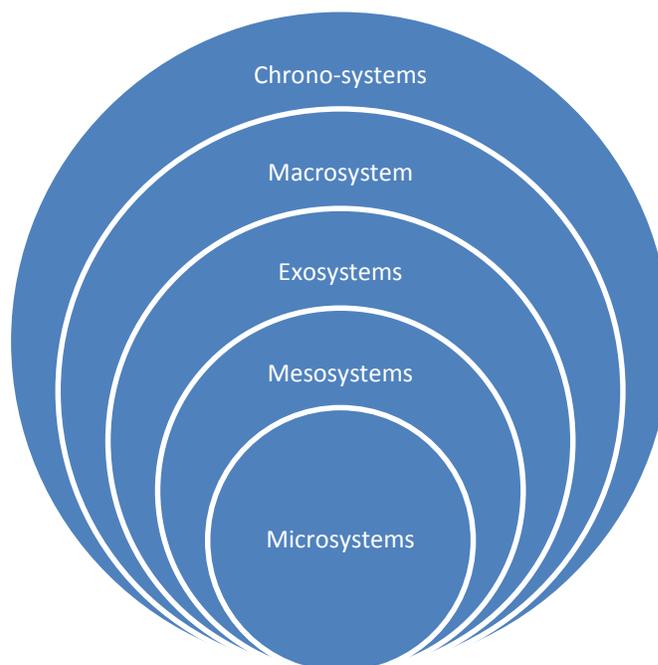
Goodness-of-Fit

From an ecological perspective, the product of criminal activity may be a

byproduct of a lack of goodness of fit (Siporin, 1980). Goodness-of-fit is the match

between the person and their environment (Greene, 2008). The life stressors caused by

criminal activity may also cause individuals to lack goodness of fit. When there is a

goodness-of-fit, the developing person has nurturing and support within their

environment and the individual is allowed to grow and adapt. However, when there is

poor goodness-of-fit, environments in which the developing person lives are not

nurturing or supportive and do not allow the individual to flourish (Greene, 2008). In

human ecological theory, people are most often framed as striving for a goodness-of-fit

(Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998). Goodness-of-fit comes through transactions between people and their environments (Pardeck, 1996) but it is not always achieved because of the demands or life stressors. Life stressors may include difficult transitions or traumatic events. Life stressors disrupt the individuals fit with the environment (Payne, 2005). The life stressor in this case was the criminal conviction. The challenges that result from a criminal conviction make it difficult to move past the record and to achieve goodness-of-fit. However, ecological theory is not concerned about cause of the life stressors, but rather the consequences of life stressors on individuals and their environment (Germain & Gitterman, 1980). The purpose of this dissertation was not to understand *why* fathers have criminal convictions, but to understand the consequence of those records on them individually as well as on the other parts of their environments (i.e. work, housing, family).

Transactions to achieve goodness-of-fit may be adaptive or maladaptive. *Adaptation* is a key concept in human ecological theory and is defined as "an active exchange between the person and environment" (Greene, 2008; p. 213). Adaptation includes making changes within the environment and making changes within oneself. Adaptation is also a never-ending process (Germain & Gitterman, 1980). It occurs constantly in order to achieve or maintain goodness-of-fit. Poor adaptation can be damaging to individuals and their environment (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998). When fathers with a criminal conviction cannot find employment to support their children, they may become less involved with their children or return to crime as a way to support their children.

To adequately cope with life stressors like this, personal and environmental resources are needed. Coping skills or mechanisms include both internal resources (i.e. self-esteem/problem solving skills) and external resources (family, social network, supporters) (Greene, 2008). According to Germain and Gitterman (1996) personal resources for coping include the following:

> Motivation, problem-solving and relationship skills, a hopeful outlook, optimal levels of self-esteem and self-direction, the ability to identify and use the information from the environment about the stressor and how to deal with; self-restraint, and ability to seek environmental resources and to use them effectively (p. 13).

While this list is long, it is interesting to examine it from the lens of individuals involved in the criminal justice system, or individuals who have criminal convictions. These individuals typically have poorer problem-solving skills and self-restraint. Even if they are no longer involved in crime, the collateral consequences of a criminal record make it difficult for these individuals to have a hopeful outlook and to seek out and use environmental resources. Because of their record, they are often denied access to the resources in the environment that could help them (i.e. housing, employment, public assistance). How might fathers with criminal records cope when their personal resources may be limited? They may turn to their environmental resources in their ecosystems.

Germain and Gitterman (1996) name environmental resources as networks of public and private organizations and institutions as well as informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and work colleagues. As with personal resources, environmental

resources may also be limited for the sample in this study. Family and friends are important to reducing recidivism (Poehlmann, Dallaire, Loper, & Shear, 2010) but often with this population bridges may have been burned due to constant cycles of involvement with the criminal justice system. Work colleagues have also been found to facilitate pro-social behaviors in this population (Laub & Sampson, 2003) but again so many are excluded from these employment opportunities due to collateral consequences which limit potential positive work colleagues in their lives.

Applying Human Ecological Theory

Limited personal and environmental resources clearly impact fathers directly, but by applying ecosystem models, it becomes clear that these limited resources also impact fathers' relationships and social networks. In the case of this dissertation, the network of focus is his children and the mother of his children. The way in which a father with a criminal conviction is treated in his environment and in the larger society may affect his relationship with his children and his co-parent. Particular for fathers, male identity and parental status have been historically tied to employment, as "unemployment diminishes that identity and gives rise to ambiguity or even outright conflict in the family" (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000; p.82). An unmarried father with a criminal conviction may have increased difficulty finding employment and thus have difficulty providing financial support for his children. The lack of financial support by the father may place a strain on the relationship between the co-parents and may also limit a father's involvement in the lives of his children. As demonstrated in the literature review, unemployed fathers are at

greater risk for not seeing their kids (Guzzo, 2009), whereas fathers who contribute financially to their children created healthier relationships with their co-parent (Young and Holcomb, 2007).

Human ecology theory directs researchers to look at the niches and habitats of fathers with a criminal conviction. A *niche* is defined as the position that a particular individual may hold in society, while *habitat* is the "physical and social settings of clients" (Payne, 2005; p. 151). One's access to resources may be abundant or may be limited depending on their social position (niche) or physical and social setting (habitat). It is difficult for individuals to cope when their niches do not support growth and their habitats do not provide services in the community that allow for greater social functioning. When individual niches or habitats are not supported, individuals face isolation, disorientation, and helplessness. Poor habitats may hamper vital functions of family and community life (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). This is often true for low-income unmarried fathers with criminal convictions. They are in habitats that limit their growth and opportunities.

The sample of fathers with a criminal conviction in the dissertation's secondary dataset predominately lived in an economically depressed community (North Minneapolis) where there was limited affordable and safe housing, limited job opportunities, and higher rates of crime. It was important to consider the role of this habitat on fathers with a criminal conviction and the role this habit has on his relationship with his co-parent and his children. The limited resources of this habitat may limit the

father's ability to cope with the life stressors and thus influence his other relationships in his environment.

Niches are also important for this sample of fathers. The stigma of a criminal conviction places these men at a lower standard or position in society, particularly as they carry this mark throughout their environments. Many individuals have niches that do not support human needs, rights, and ambitions because of personal and cultural attributes (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). There is no other perfect example of this other than individuals who have a criminal conviction Because of their past, many individuals with criminal convictions are stripped of their basic needs and rights due to collateral consequences. Germain and Gitterman (1996) state that niches are developed and maintained by society's political, social, and economic structure. The very nature of the collateral consequences that result from a criminal conviction keep these individuals stuck in the underclass (Alexander, 2010). However, very few policy makers, housing landlords, or hiring managers consider the effect that collateral consequences have on these individual's families. By using the lens of the human ecological theory, it becomes clear how the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction influence not only those individuals, but also their entire environment. In a human ecological view, fathers with a criminal conviction are not seen as deviant or pathological, but rather as part of a malfunctioning exosystem (Pardeck, 1996).

The Present Study

The literature synthesized here demonstrates the importance of understanding relationship quality, resources, and stigma in unpacking the effects of low-level criminal justice contact on fathering. Relationship quality may be affected by many factors, including the level of financial and other basic support provided by the father. Given that a criminal conviction can hinder individuals in finding employment, housing, or other basic needs, it is important to consider how a criminal conviction may hinder relationship quality and father involvement in families with low incomes and unmarried parents. This dissertation explores correlations among between co-parents' relationship quality and father involvement in low income families with men who have criminal convictions. This study also explores whether relationship quality mediates and/or moderates the effect of criminal conviction on father involvement. Criminal conviction was defined in four separate ways, described next. Finally, this research explores the collateral consequences of criminal convictions on fathers (through the covariates) and the potential affects they have within other domains of their ecosystem.

Part IV: Hennepin County Co-parent Court Model

The Co-parent Court Project (the "parent study" from which the proposed secondary data would be obtained) is a problem solving court for unmarried co-parents located in Hennepin County, Minnesota. It is a wraparound project that includes four components: 1) paternity establishment and child support; 2) co-parent workshops; 3) individualized support; and 4) a customized parenting plan. The goal of the problem solving court is to help co-parents work together to support their children and to "help each parent understand the important roles that both mothers and fathers play in the life of a child" (Co-Parent Court Brochure, n.d.).

The workshop teaches parents how to co-parent in ways that are healthy and effective. The curriculum used *Together we Can: Creating a Healthy Future for Our Family*. The curriculum focuses on healthy communication with the other parent, how to effectively make decisions with the other parent, and how to parent together even though they are not married or romantically involved.

The Parenting Plan is a comprehensive document that incorporates parenting time for fathers (who is often the non-custodial and non-resident parent). It includes: "making decisions together (regarding education, religion & culture and medical care), daily care and parenting (including parenting time, holidays, vacations, child care, and ongoing contact with child(ren) and participation in child(ren)'s activities), family relationships, and financial responsibility" (Marczak et. al, 2013; p12). Once parents both agree to a plan, it is reviewed by a judge and becomes a legal document that is reviewed at the final hearing. However, parents have the ability to go back to court and ask for modifications.

Based on their individual needs, participants may also receive case management through other community resources and supports.

Evaluation Design

The Co-Parent Court project was evaluated by a team of researchers at the University of Minnesota Extension and led by Dr. Mary Marczak. The evaluation design was a quasi-experimental design using mixed methods to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors at pre, post, and follow up. The research design included both process and impact evaluations. The aim of the process evaluation was to document the program components (which includes workshops and the others services mentioned above) and identify any barriers to implementation. The impact evaluation examined changes from pre, post, and follow up in the treatment and control group, drawing from several instruments designed to measure co-parenting relationships and involvement in child's activities as well as changes in variables such as employment, income, and child support after participating in the co-parent court project.

Hypothesis

There was no formal hypotheses in the original evaluation. However, the program was designed with the goal that participants in the treatment group would have increased child support payment, healthier co-parenting relationships, and increased father involvement than participants in the control group.

Recruitment Strategy

Hennepin County randomly sampled from all individuals who were seeking public assistance (which could include welfare, healthcare, or food stamp benefits). The court administrator randomly assigned participants to either the treatment or control group. Those assigned to the control group received typical court services, while those in the treatment group became part of the co-parent court project and received all four components of the intervention. Inclusion into the treatment or control group required participants to meet the following inclusion criterion: 1) both parents must be present in court; 2) the father must admit that he is the father of the child or there must be a positive genetic test stating he is the father (adjudication); 3) no interpreter is needed and both parents are able to speak English; 4) the co-parents do not have orders for protection; 5) they are 18 years or older; and 6) originally, zip codes were limited to those in North Minneapolis. However, this limited the number of eligible participants so the zip codes were opened up to those living in Hennepin County.

Number of Participants and Demographics

There were 709 participants in the co-parent court project (360 mothers and 349 fathers). The majority of the participants were African American (170, 72%). Half the sample was between the ages of 21 – 30. Eighty percent of co-parents in the sample have only one child together (Marczak, Craft, Hardman, Becher, Ruhland, Miller, Galos, & Demulling, 2013). The Hennepin County Co-Parent Court Sample was made up of mostly never married individuals (90%). Approximately 5% of the participants were

previously married and were separated or divorced during recruitment and programming. Over half of study participants are unemployed (54%). About 20% are employed part-time and 24% fulltime.

Out of the 709 participants, 542 individuals consented to the study and completed the Time 1 Survey, which was considered the pre-survey in the Parent Study. Two hundred and sixty-eight fathers completed a pre-survey and 274 mothers completed a pre-survey. The numbers do not match evenly because a mother or father in a dyad opted out of participation. For this initial design, it is unknown how many were part of the control group and how many were in the treatment group. For this proposed study, however, the control and treatment pre-survey are combined.

Information about Data Collection

The survey used by the Hennepin County Co-Parent Court Project is comprised of 172 survey questions that measures a participant's self-reported time spent with their child, activities and involvement with their child, health and development of their child, relationship quality between the co-parent, and co-parenting alliance between the co-parents. The Co-Parent Court Survey was developed from nine pre-existing survey instruments: Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative PY2-Survey, Together We Can Questionnaire, Coping Health Inventory for Parents, General Health Questionnaire, Measures of Family Well-being, Parental Sense of Competence Scale, Co-Parenting Alliance Scale, Infant Child Checklist, and Child Behavior Checklist. This survey was given at pre, post, and follow up. In addition to these survey questions, there were 22

demographic questions that focused on employment, financial status, living arrangement, marital status, number of children, and housing. The measures and survey questions are included in this proposal in Appendix C.

For the control group, pre-survey data collection occurred before their court appearance to receive public assistance. A research assistant approached the co-parents (separately if they were known not to get along) to tell them about the study and ask if they wanted to participate. If they did want to participate, they were each given the consent form and survey to complete while they waited to go into court. Once the survey was completed, they were given a $20 gift certificate for their time and participation. Participants in the control group were also asked if they wanted to participate at the first class of the educational workshops. If they agreed to participate they were given the survey before the workshop started.

For both the treatment and control group, post and follow up surveys were done at the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Engagement Center (UROC). Post surveys were completed 6 months after pre-surveys and follow up surveys were completed at approximately 3 months after post-survey. Follow up consisted of the survey and a qualitative interview. Post survey participants received at $30 gift certificate and follow up participants received a $40 gift certificate.

This evaluation, while separate, provided the framework, research setting, and empirical data for this dissertation. The next chapter describes the questions this dissertation aims to answer, potential hypotheses, and an overview of the research design.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Questions & Hypotheses

The central research question is: how does a criminal conviction and co-parents' relationship quality influence fathers' involvement with their children?

Hypotheses

The four hypotheses are:

1. Fathers who had conviction records had poorer relationships with their children's mothers than fathers who had no conviction records.

Father's conviction record	⟶	Co-Parent relationship quality
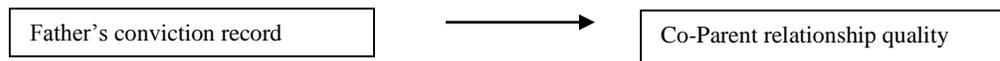
2. Fathers who had conviction records were less involved with their children than fathers who had no conviction records.

Father's conviction Record	⟶	Father Involvement with children
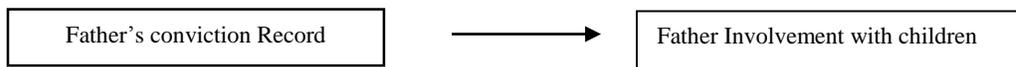
3. Relationship quality will explain the effects of father's conviction record on father involvement with his children. Put another way, relationship quality will mediate the effect of father's conviction record on father involvement. Here, multiple regression analysis was used to analyze if relationship quality was a mediating variable.
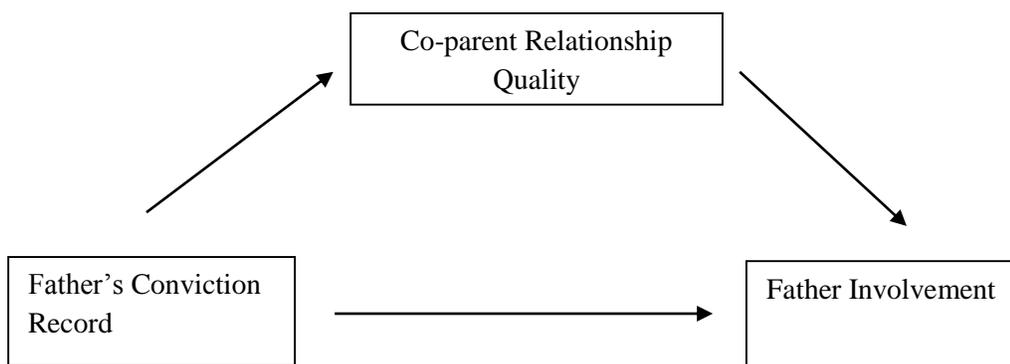
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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Co-parent Relationship│
                    │       Quality        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
              ↗                              ↘
  ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Father's Conviction│  ─────────→  │ Father Involvement │
  │      Record       │              │                   │
  └──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
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4. A high-quality relationship between fathers and mothers will ameliorate the ill effects of the father's conviction record on his level of involvement with his children. Put another way, relationship quality will moderate the association between father's conviction record and father involvement.

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Co-parent Relationship│
                    │       Quality        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ↓
  ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Father's Conviction│  ─────────→  │ Father           │
  │      Record       │              │ Involvement      │
  └──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
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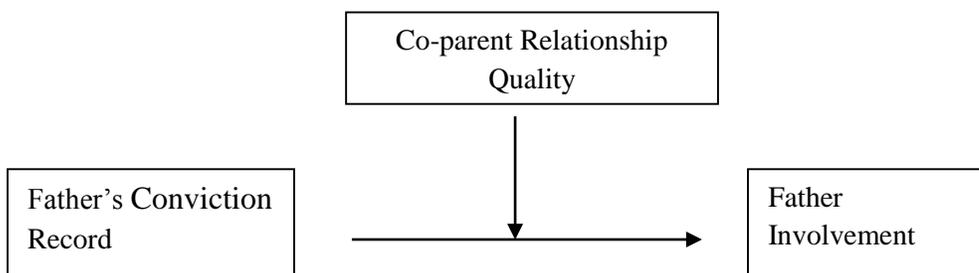
Variables and Operational Definitions

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this describe fathers' conviction record. Data on criminal record charges and convictions were collected for three levels: misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, and felony (as described in the definitions section of this dissertation). Petty misdemeanors (such as minor speeding offenses) were excluded. Criminal records data are public and accessible electronically. To obtain these data, each individual in the parent study was checked through the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) to identify whether they had a criminal record. Only adult criminal record information was collected (no juvenile data). Detailed individual criminal histories were collected for the 10 most recent records. If an individual had more than 10 records, detailed information was collected for the 10 most recent records and then summary data were collected for the records preceding the most recent 10. Summary data included the number and types of records. This decision was made after discovering that several individuals in the sample had 30 to 40 different records that happened a long time ago. The parent study was only concerned with recent records. The criminal record data was collected by two graduate research assistants and one undergraduate research assistant.

There is precedent for these analytic choices. Studies have measured criminal records in a variety of ways. One study that examined intergenerational transmission of criminal behavior used only convictions and only counted one conviction per day (Besemer, 2012). Another study by Uggen (2000) used the number of arrests and a dichotomous indicator of prior economic crime to look at work and employment as a

turning point in criminal offending. Finally, a recent study of recidivism risk used age at first arrest and type of crime as their measure of criminal record (Blumstein & Nakamura, 2012).

In the current study, four criminal conviction variables were created. First, the criminal conviction was operationalized by creating a dichotomous variable (1 = conviction, 0 = no conviction). The second analysis of the criminal conviction was a count of the number of criminal convictions of any level. Those with 11 or more criminal convictions were entered as having 11 records. This variable was labeled "total number of convictions." The third variable described criminal conviction by severity. Severity was measured by whether the father had a felony conviction (1=felony conviction, 0=no felony conviction). The fourth variable related to criminal conviction was a count of the number of felony convictions. Those with 11 or more felony convictions were entered as having 11 records. This variable was labeled "total number of felonies." Originally, the analytic plan was to measure criminal conviction by timing, such as analyzing those records that happened 5 or more ago versus those that happened more recently. Unfortunately, due to incomplete dates on Minnesota criminal conviction data, that type of analysis was impossible to fully execute. More on the how the criminal conviction variables were created is discussed in the Data Analysis Section.

Control Variables

It was important in the analysis to adjust for variables related to characteristics of those with a criminal background, as well as variables that could be impacted by a history

of crime and punishment. Control variables included: age, race, education, income, employment, current housing situation, history of homelessness, and whether or not the fathers were on public assistance. The original analytic strategy included history of mental illness and history of substance abuse. The questions in the original parent study were: "Do you have a history of mental illness" and "Do you have a history of substance abuse?" The majority of the participants either did not answer these questions or checked no, and thus were removed from the primary dataset. Due to this, these questions were not included in this secondary analysis.

Demographic data and a set of control variables were collected through an intake form. The intake form was completed at the same time participants completed the pre-survey in the parent study. The intake data was stored in a data management system called Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), and then matched by case and merged with the Pre-survey data. The control variables and the rationale for their inclusion in the current study are outlined below.

1. Age is an important control variable because older individuals are likely to age out of criminal behavior (Massoglia & Uggen, 2010) and because older participants may have higher relationship quality (because they have aged out of crime). Participants were also asked to report their date of birth. This variable was created by subtracting the date of the survey from their date of birth. This created the age at the time that they took the pre-survey.

2. Education level is often correlated with other control variables, such as income and employment. Lower levels of education are also more prevalent in populations

involved in the criminal justice system (Lochner & Maretti, 2004). Participants were asked on the intake form their highest educational degree. Responses include some high school, high school/GED, associates/technical degree, some college, college degree, and graduate/higher level degree. The education variable was analyzed as a continuous variable, so these categorical responses were recoded into numerical variables. The data was recoded as followed: did not have high school degree = 11, completed high school or GED = 12, some college = 13, 2-year college/technical school degree = 14, 4-year college degree = 16, and post-college degree = 17.

    3. Race was a control variable because, as pointed out in the literature, racial disparities exist in the criminal justice system with African Americans disproportionately more likely than whites to have a criminal record (Mauer, 2006). However, the racial makeup of the sample was majority African American, at 170 respondents or 71% of the sample. Seventeen (7%) of the fathers were white, seven (3%) self-identified as Asian, six (3%) self-identified as Hispanic/Latino, three (1%) self-identified as American Indian, and 23 (10%) fathers stated they were multi-racial. Since African Americans had the largest racial categories and the other racial categories had small sample sizes, the race variable was recoded into one dichotomous race variable: African American and Other. The "Other" variable combined into one variable white, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, and multi-racial. There was no statistical difference in the mean scores of relationship quality and father involvement between the races that were combined into the "other" racial category. Therefore, African American was coded 1 and all other races were coded 0 in this binary covariate.

4. Employment status. Options included full-time, part-time, seasonal work, or unemployment. In this study, employment status was coded as a dichotomous variable. Fathers were recoded as a 1 for employment if they were employed for full-time, part-time, and seasonal work. They were coded as 0 if they had no employment. Employment was an important control variable because collateral consequences that result from a criminal record often make it difficult for individuals to find employment (Alexander, 2010; Pager, 2007). Employment, in turn, can impact both co-parent relationship quality and father involvement (Gibson-Davis, 2007; Waller, 2001).

5. *Income* is related to employment. Not only do individuals with criminal records have less employment opportunities, but are also more likely to receive less earnings and income when they are employed (Waldfogel, 1994). In the parent study, participants were asked their annual income before taxes. This was an open-ended response, so whatever they recorded was included in the analysis. No further recoding was completed. Thus, father's income was analyzed as a continuous variable.

6. Public assistance is related to income. Individuals with lower incomes are more likely to be on public assistance. However, many individuals who have criminal records are unable to obtain some types of public assistance due to the collateral consequences that may bar them from receiving this type of service. Those who received public assistance were coded as a 1 and those who were not receiving public assistance were coded as 0.

7. Housing status is an important control variable because similar to employment, collateral consequences can make it difficult for individuals with a criminal record to find

housing. Previous research studies have shown that criminal histories can impact housing (Malone, 2009). Additionally, if they are not employed then it is difficult for them to afford permanent housing. As stated previously, both employment and housing may impact a father's ability to provide for their children. Participants were asked in the survey if they had been homeless in the last two years – yes or no. This dichotomous variable was recoded to 1 for yes and a 0 for no. Participants were also asked in the survey about their current housing situation. The choices included – own, rent, public housing, and living with someone. Currently homelessness, unfortunately, was not listed as a choice in this question. This current housing situation variable was recoded in the analysis as 1 equaled own/rent and 0 equaled public housing or living with someone else.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were co-parent relationship quality and father involvement. In Hypothesis 3, relationship quality was treated as a mediating variable; and in Hypothesis 4, relationship quality was treated as a moderator variable (discussed in later sections). Dependent variables were derived from the survey items. The measures under consideration for this dissertation were attuned to four specific constructs: 1) Relationship quality/communication/conflict, 2) Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM), 3) Father Involvement, and 4) Role of Fatherhood Questionnaire. Upon further review, however, the measures of interest were reduced to PAM and Father Involvement. The Role of Fatherhood Measure was dropped from consideration because this measure was entirely about attitudes and opinions about

fathering, and not about actual activities the survey participants performed as fathers with or for their children. The relationship quality/communication/conflict variable was dropped because it was simply about how co-parents communicated and handled conflict, whereas PAM included these constructs as well as included the quality of their co-parenting relationship between each other. In the final analysis, PAM was used to measure the relationship quality and the Father Involvement Measure was used to measure father involvement.

Relationship Quality

Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM)

PAM uses 19 items to measure quality of co-parenting relationships. Items use a 5 point-Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). PAM has been used with several diverse populations with high levels of reliability. In the parent study's analysis, the PAM had a Cronbach's Alpha for fathers of 0.96 at pre-survey, which indicates high reliability (Marczak, Becher, Hardmen, Galos, and Ruhland, 2015). For this dissertation, a Cronbach's Alpha was also checked for this secondary sample. This sample of fathers also showed a Cronbach Alpha of .95, which again indicates high reliability with the measure. PAM is a one-dimensional measure of parenting alliance. The higher the score, the higher the indication of stronger parenting alliance. The full list of questions are included in Appendix A.

Father Involvement

When surveyed in the Co-Parent Court study, fathers were asked how often they performed certain activities with their child. Activities included both play and obtaining basic needs (i.e., dress, feed, shop for child). Survey participants were asked to rate their participation with their children on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Higher scores show that the father is more involved in child care activities. These questions came from the Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative Survey/Together We Can Instrument. If the father did not live with the child, they were instructed to answer how often they did the specified activities when they saw their child. The Cronbach's Alpha for fathers was 0.91 in the pre-survey, which represents good reliability (Marczak et. al, 2015). In the secondary sample for this dissertation analysis, Cronbach's Alpha for fathers was .92. The questions under the Father Involvement Measure are located in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Since this a secondary analysis design, all the data for this dissertation was previously collected. All pre-survey and demographic data were entered and stored in Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 22 (SPSS). All criminal history data was stored in a Microsoft Excel file. Since they were two distinct datasets, the datasets were merged into one SPSS file for analysis, matched by case. The data were merged using their unique study identification number for each participant. This unique study ID number was the same for participants in the pre-survey data and in the criminal history

data. It was a non-identifying number and was only used to track individual participant data.

Once the data were merged, further data reduction was conducted to prepare for quantitative analysis. Since multiple questions were under the measures of PAM and father involvement, they were reduced to create one PAM score and one father involvement score for each survey participant. No reverse coding was needed as the questions under these two measures all followed the same direction. A higher score in PAM meant the co-parents had a more positive relationship. A higher score in father involvement indicated that the father was more involved in the day to day activities of their child's life. The scores were computed through calculating a mean score for the combined questions under the measures. This goal of data reduction is that answers related to questions can be reduced to a single variable (Blaikie, 2003). Participant surveys with over 50% missing data under the measures of interests were omitted.

Creating Criminal Conviction Variables

Variables to operationalize and analyze the criminal record were also created. To start, a very basic level dichotomous code was created to report if a respondent had a criminal record. Sample participants were given a 0 if they had no criminal record and 1 if they had a criminal record of any type. This criminal record variable could have included an arrest but never charged, or a charge that was never convicted. It could have also included a charge that was convicted. Out of the 237 fathers, 165 (70%) had some type of criminal record. However, this was not a very meaningful variable because it was

so vague; it could have included low level offenses as well as arrests and convictions. Due to this, the variable was dropped and four additional criminal record variables were created to provide more specificity. These variables examined a criminal conviction. The first variable created was a conviction dummy variable. Sample participants were given a 0 if they had no criminal conviction in their history and a 1 if they ever had a conviction. This conviction dummy variable was for any type of conviction, so it could include misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, or felonies. The second variable created added up the number of convictions. This was called conviction.total and included all types of convictions. The third variable created was a felony conviction dummy variable. If respondents were ever convicted of a felony they received a 1 and if they had no felony convictions they were given a 0. The fourth variable created was called felony.conviction.total., which added up the total number of felony convictions for each father.

To summarize, criminal conviction was therefore analyzed in four ways to answer each research question: 1) convictions (yes/no); 2) total number of convictions, 3) felony conviction (yes/no); and 4) total number of felony convictions. After the variables were constructed, quantitative analysis began. Overall, the sample in the secondary analysis of this dissertation included 237 fathers.

Univariate Analyses

Univariate analysis consisted of basic descriptive statistics of the sample, including the number of fathers in the secondary dataset and demographic breakdowns

(race, education, income, age, etc.). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the number and percentage of fathers who have a criminal record. For those who had a criminal record, further analysis examined 1) convictions (yes/no); 2) total number of convictions, 3) felony conviction (yes/no); and 4) total number of felony convictions. Univariate analysis was also used to show baseline levels of father involvement and relationship quality (PAM) at the pre-survey. Univariate analysis was conducted to describe the sample and to motivate analytical choices for multivariate analyses, such as detecting outliers or identifying incomplete data. Univariate analysis was also used to ensure basic assumptions were met for multiple regression analysis; specifically that variables are normally distributed, and that the independent and dependent variable have a linear relationship, using scatterplots to check for this assumption.

Bivariate Analyses

After descriptive analysis, the analysis centered on the relationship between a father's criminal conviction and relationship quality with his co-parent (Hypothesis 1), and father's criminal conviction and father involvement (Hypothesis 2). Bivariate analysis was used to show if fathers' criminal conviction was correlated with relationship quality between co-parents and if a criminal conviction was correlated with father involvement. Step one was to analyze correlations for the first hypothesis, and step two was to analyze correlations for the second hypothesis. Both hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Correlations and t-tests, which test the statistical significance of an observed correlation in the means between two groups (fathers with a criminal conviction and

fathers without a criminal conviction). Correlations were considered statistically

significant if $p < .05$, which is the most common level for significance tests (Agresti &

Finlay, 1997).

Criminal involvement was operationalized into two continuous variables and two

categorical variables. The continuous variables included: 1) the total number of

convictions and 2) total number of felony convictions. Data were tested for significant

correlations between total number of convictions, total number of felony convictions,

relationship quality, father involvement, and the covariates. The correlations were first

analyzed without covariates to establish basic relationships. In the second correlation

analysis, the covariates were added into the models to see if they made a difference in the

outcomes through conducting partial correlations.

Multiple Regression

Multiple regression and the Baron and Kenny (1986) method to test for mediation

were used to examine Hypothesis 3. Multiple regression predicted the dependent variable

using the independent variables and other control variables. Multiple regression is a

statistical method for exploring the relationship between a single dependent variable and

one or more independent variables (Allison, 1999). In Hypothesis 3, father involvement

remained the dependent variable and indicators of criminal conviction(s) were the

independent variable. However, relationship quality (which was the dependent variable in

hypothesis 1), was tested as a possible mediator, and therefore became an independent

variable in Hypothesis 3.

Baron and Kenny describe one method of testing for mediation. First, there must be evidence for the "C" pathway, which in this dissertation must show that the criminal conviction is related to father involvement. Then there must be a significant "A" pathway, which in this dissertation was that criminal conviction must be related to relationship quality. Then there must be a significant "B" pathway, which in this dissertation was that relationship quality is correlated with father involvement. Finally, when relationship quality is added to the model, the "C" pathway relationship between criminal conviction and father involvement must be reduced in magnitude.

Researchers use multiple regression to predict or to explain causal relationships (Allison, 1999). Multiple regression also makes it possible to include a number of variables to determine which variable is the "best predictor" of the dependent variable. In this current study, the independent variables (criminal conviction and relationship quality), along with the control variables, were analyzed to determine the dependent variable (father involvement). Analysis was ran without the control variables first , then the control variables were added to examine any significant differences in outcome. Regression analysis is a statistical test that determines the regression line between variables (Schroeder, Sjoquist, & Stephan, 1986). According to Allison, this linear equation is "perhaps the simplest way to describe the relationship between 2 or more variables and still get reasonable accurate predictions" (1999:1).

As mentioned, this analysis also examined if the IV (criminal conviction) diminished in magnitude in its effect on the DV when the mediator (co-parent relationship quality) was entered into the model. A mediator variable tells us how or why

certain effects occur (Baron & Kenny, 1986). It seeks to clarify "the nature of relationships between the independent variable and dependent variable" (Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003). Mediation happens when a third variable plays an important governing role in the relationship of interest. Once the multiple regression models are created (as seen below), the analysis was used to check the correlation coefficient (or R^2). The R^2 lies between 0 and 1 with closer to 1 being a better prediction (Howell, 2006). R^2 is the percent of variance explained by the model.

Moderation analysis was conducted to test Hypothesis 4. According to Baron and Kenny, a moderator is a third variable that affects the correlation between two other variables (1986). It was hypothesized that relationship quality would serve as a moderator between type of criminal conviction and levels of father involvement. For fathers who had high conviction records and high relationship quality, father involvement would in turn also be high.

One method to analyze this question is to conceptualize the interaction effects in terms of a moderated relationship (Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003). In interaction analysis there must be a moderator (in this study it is relationship quality), a focal independent variable (criminal conviction types) whose effect on the dependent variable (father involvement) is believed to change as a function of the moderator variable. To analyze moderation, an interaction variable between relationship quality and each of the criminal convictions type was created. Multiple regression was used to see if relationship quality was indeed a moderator. The moderation effect would be confirmed if there was a statistically significant increase in R^2 after the addition of the interaction term.

There are several key assumptions in multiple regression analysis. Tests were conducted on all required assumptions to ensure they were met as follows. Multiple regression assumes linearity (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Thus, a scatterplot was created to ensure linearity of the data. Additionally, tests were run in the bivariate analysis to ensure that multicollinearity was not a problem. Multicollinearity is when predictor variables measuring the same concept are highly correlated with one another. All assumptions to use multiple regressions were met with this dissertation. What follows are the results.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

The sample included only fathers (n = 237). The ages ranged from 18 to 54 with the mean age at 29 (SD = 7.0) Average educational level was a high school diploma or GED (M= 12 years of education, SD=1.06). There was only one father in the sample who reported having a post-college degree (e.g. Master's, PhD, M.D.). The sample was evenly spilt between employed (46%) and unemployed (44%). Twenty-two (10%) respondents did not answer this question. The mean annual income was relatively low at $8,238; although one participant had an annual income of $68,750. Twenty-six percent of the sample had indicated that they had been homeless in the past. More than half (57%) rent or own their residence. See Table 1 for sample characteristics.

Bivariate Relationships between Criminal Justice History and Study Covariates

Over half of the sample had a conviction record (161; 68%) and of those, 68 (29%) had at least one felony conviction. Of the African Americans, 121 (54%) of the fathers had at least one conviction; the mean convictions for African Americans was 3.5. Fifty-three (24%) of African American fathers had a felony conviction. This finding is illustrated on Tables 6 and 7.

Chi square analysis was utilized to test for significant correlations between the dummy-coded criminal convictions and PAM and Father Involvement measures. A chi square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated a significant association between felony conviction and employment, X^2 (1, $n = 215$) = 7.8, $p = .01$, so

that those with a felony conviction were less likely to be employed. A chi square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) also indicated a significant association between felony conviction and public assistance, X^2 (1, n = 228) = 8.5, p =.00 so that those with a felony conviction were less likely to be receiving public assistance (See Table 7). No covariates were significantly associated with having a conviction or not (See Table 6).

Independent-samples t-test were tested correlations between continuous criminal conviction variables (number of total convictions and number of total felony convictions) with the categorical covariates. An independent-samples t-test indicated that race is statistically significant with three variables – total number of convictions, total number of felony convictions, and income, so that African Americans have more convictions, felony convictions, and lower income (See Table 19).

There was also significant difference in income for fathers with a felony conviction (M = 3,650 SD = 6,874.39) and fathers without a felony conviction (M = 9,680.11, SD = 14,265.20); t (136) = 3.3, p =.001 (See Table 10). Fathers with felony convictions reported a lower income than fathers without felony convictions. An independent-samples t-test showed that there was significant difference in ages for fathers with a conviction (M =30, SD = 7.1) and for fathers without a conviction (M = 26, SD = 5.2); t (207) = -5.2, p = .01. The number of convictions increased with age. Table 9 and 10 shows the results of these t-tests.

Bivariate Relationships among Categorical Study Covariates

Tables 2 through 7 show how categorical covariates are related to one another. Race was not significantly related to any of the other categorical covariates, outside of the criminal involvement variables reported above (See Table 2). Chi-square tests for independence indicated that employment was statistically associated with currently/rent own X^2 (1, n = 210) = 4.8, p = .028, with more fathers who were employed also currently rent/own their own home. Employment was also statistically associated with public assistance, X^2 (1, n = 212) = 27.48, p = .000. Fathers who were employed were less likely to receive public assistance (See Table 3).

Homelessness and currently renting/owning were statistically significant. Those who had a history of homelessness were less likely to currently being renting or owning their own home, X^2 (1, n = 222) = 27.62, p. =.000. There was also a significant relationship between homelessness and receiving public assistance, X2 (1, 214) = 8.73, p =.003. Those who had a no history of homelessness were also more likely to have been receiving public assistance. Table 5 shows a significant relationship between current housing status and public assistance, X2 (1, 223) = 11.97, p = .003. Those who are living with someone else or living in public housing are more likely to be receiving public assistance.

Bivariate Relationships among Continuous Study Covariates

Correlation analyses were conducted among all continuous variables. Bivariate analysis was used to show if the conviction total and the felony conviction total records

were correlated with relationship quality between co-parents, and if these two types of criminal convictions were correlated with father involvement. Before testing these correlations, scatterplots were derived to ensure the relationships between the variables are linear; liner relationships were confirmed. Table 8 shows correlations between continuous criminal conviction variables – conviction total and felony conviction total and the covariates.

Age (M =29.3, SD = 7.0) and conviction record total (M = 3.3, SD = 3.6) were significantly positively correlated $r = .27p = .00$ so that total number of convictions increases with age. Age was also positively correlated with felony conviction record total (M = .54, SD = 1.0), $r = .16$ $p = .03$ so that total number of felony convictions also increases with age. PAM (M = 3.6, SD = .89) and father involvement (M = 3.4, SD = 1.1) were significantly positively correlated, $r = .32$, $p= .00$ so that higher levels of relationship quality were associated with greater father involvement. Not surprisingly, Table 8 also shows that income is significantly positively correlated with education and age. In other words, the higher a father's education and age, the higher his income. Felony conviction total was correlated with income, r = -.20, p = .017; fathers with more felony convictions had lower incomes.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Fathers who had criminal convictions would have poorer relationships with their children's mothers than fathers who had no criminal convictions.

To address this hypothesis, all four criminal conviction variables were compared with the PAM score. For the criminal conviction categorical variables (conviction.dummy and felony.conviction.dummy), t-tests were employed. An independent-samples t-test showed there was a significant difference in PAM scores between fathers who had a conviction ($M = 3.6$, $SD = .83$) and fathers who did not have a conviction (M = 3.5, .96), t (207) = -2.3, $p = .025$, so that fathers with a conviction had higher relationship quality with the child's mother. An independent-sample t-test found that the difference in PAM scores with fathers who had a felony conviction and fathers who did not have a felony conviction was not significantly different. Fathers with a felony conviction were ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .72$) and PAM scores for fathers without a felony conviction were (M = 3.5, SD = .93), t (232) = -2.0, $p = .051$; fathers with a felony conviction and fathers without a felony conviction had equivalent relationship quality with the child's mother. Tables 9 through 10 show the results of the independent sample t-test.

For the continuous criminal conviction variables (conviction.total and felony.conviction.total), correlation tests were employed to ascertain the relationship between these covariates and PAM. Results of the zero order correlations showed no statistically significant correlations between conviction totals and PAM, r = .062, n = 234, $p = .352$. There was also no statistically significant correlation between felony conviction total and PAM, r = .097, n = 238, $p = .138$. These results are illustrated in Table 8.

Relationship between Criminal Justice History and PAM while Controlling for Study Covariates

PAM was regressed on each categorical criminal conviction variable, while controlling for all covariates significantly correlated with criminal conviction and PAM variables. These covariates are: race, employment status, current housing status, history of homelessness, age, education level, income, and public assistance. Multiple regressions for PAM were estimated using the four criminal conviction types and the covariates. Tables 11 through 14 show the results of the multiple regressions. In the first model, multiple regressions were used to test if the covariates and the conviction dummy variable significantly predicted PAM. The results of the model indicated that the covariates explained 10% of the variance $F(9,89) = 1.01$, $p = .372$. The second model tested PAM with the covariates and the conviction total variable. This too was not statistically significant, and the results of the model explained 9% of the variance $F(9, 89) = 1.06$, $p = .397$.

The third model included the covariates and the felony conviction dummy variable, which was not statistically significant. The results of this model explained 9% of the variance $F(9, 89) = .978$, $p = .464$. The final model included all covariates and used the felony conviction total variable to predict PAM. Similar to the other models, this model was not statistically significant and accounted for 9% of the variance $F(9,89) = .974$, p.467. The 4 criminal conviction variables did not significantly predicate relationship quality when the covariates were added to the model. Yet, the covariate race was a significant predictor in all four models: African American fathers had consistently

higher levels of relationship quality. Further results from the multiple regressions are shown in Tables 11 - 14.

Hypothesis 2: ***Fathers who had criminal convictions would be less involved with their children than fathers who had no criminal conviction.***

To address this hypothesis, all four criminal conviction variables were compared with the father involvement score. T-tests were employed dor the criminal conviction categorical variables (conviction.dummy and felony.conviction.dummy). An independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference in father involvement between fathers who had a conviction (M = 3.4, SD = 1.12) and fathers who did not have a conviction (M = 3.4, SD = 1.08), t(221) = -.175, p = .861 (See Table 9). An independent-sample t-test found that differences in average father involvement scores between fathers who had a felony conviction and fathers who did not have a felony conviction was also not significantly different. Father involvement scores for fathers with a felony conviction were ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.01$) and father involvement scores for fathers without a felony conviction were (M = 3.4, SD = 1.13), t (221) = -1.65 , p =.101. Fathers with a felony conviction and fathers without a felony conviction had equivalent father involvement. (See Table 10).

Correlation tests were employed to ascertain the relationship between continuous criminal conviction variables (conviction.total and felony.conviction.total) and father involvement. Results of zero order correlations show no statistically significant correlations between conviction totals and father involvement, r = -.021, n = 223, p =

.758. There was also no statistically significant correlation between felony conviction total and father involvement, $r = .048$, $n = 223$, $p = .472$. See Table 8 for the results of these tests.

Father involvement was also regressed on each of the categorical and continuous criminal conviction variables while controlling for all the covariates that are significantly correlated with criminal conviction and father involvement variables. These covariates were the same that were used for the analysis in PAM. They included: race, employment status, current housing status, history of homelessness, age, education level, income, and public assistance. Multiple regressions for father involvement were estimated using the four criminal conviction types and the covariates. Tables 15 through 18 show the results of multiple regression analyses.

In the first model, multiple regressions were used to test if the covariates and the conviction dummy variable significantly predicted father involvement. This prediction model was statistically significant. The results of the model indicate that the covariates explained 20% of the variance $F(9,81) = 2.22$, $p = .029$. The second model tested father involvement with the covariates and the conviction total variable. This model was statistically significant and the results of the model explained 24% of the variance $F(9, 81) = 2.77$, $p = .007$. The third model included the covariates and the felony conviction dummy variable and the model was statistically significant. The results of this models explained 20% of the variance $F(9, 81) = .2.27$, $p = .025$. The final model included all the covariates and the felony conviction total variable to predict father involvement. Similar

to the other models, this model was statistically significant and accounted for 19% of the variance $F(9,81) = 2.19$, $p = .031$.

The 4 criminal conviction variables did not significantly predicate father involvement when the covariates were added to the model. The covariates race and employment were significant in all 4 models. African American fathers and fathers who were employed had higher levels of father involvement. Further results from the multiple regressions are shown in table 15 through 18.

Hypothesis 3: Does a good, high-quality relationship between fathers and mothers ameliorate any ill effects of a father having a criminal conviction on his level of involvement with his children? In other words, does relationship quality mediate the relationship between criminal justice history and father involvement?

Test of Mediation

Hypothesis 3 estimated that relationship quality would mediate the effect of criminal conviction on father involvement. It was unclear without further analysis whether relationship quality was indeed a mediating variable. The bivariate analysis for Hypothesis 2 was important to determine any significant relationships between criminal convictions and father involvement and criminal convictions and co-parent relationship quality. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), in order for a mediating relationship to exist, it must first be demonstrated that a significant relationship exists between the

independent variable and the outcome (path c) because if there is no relationship here then mediation is not possible.

Next, according to Baron and Kenny, there must be a significant relationship between the predictor and the mediator (path "A"); then finally a significant relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable. In summry, all three conditions must be significant in order for mediation to be possible (1986). The final step used regressions assess if the mediator variable (relationship quality) and the independent variable (criminal conviction) lessened the strength of the relationship between criminal conviction and dependent variable (father involvement).

All three conditions, however, were not met, and thus the analysis could not include a mediation variable. None of the four criminal conviction variables were significantly related to father involvement. Even though this path (path "C") was not significant, the analysis still examined path "A" (criminal conviction impacts PAM) and path "B" (PAM impacts father involvement). None of the four criminal conviction variables were significantly related to PAM. Path b was the only significant path in the expected direction. In Table 21, Father Involvement is regressed on PAM and the covariates. PAM does predicted father involvement at a statistically significant level, $F(1,221) = 25.4$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .32$, $R^2_{Adjusted} = .01$. However, since this a cross-section database it is unclear if PAM impacts father involvement or if father involvement impacts PAM.

Hypothesis 4: A high-quality relationship between fathers and mothers will ameliorate the ill effects of the father's criminal conviction on his level of involvement with his children. Put another way, relationship quality will moderate the association between father's criminal conviction and father involvement.

Test of Moderation

Hypothesis 4 tested the idea that relationship quality would moderate the relationship between criminal justice history and father involvement. In other words, it hypothsized that a high quality co-parent relationship would diminish the effect of a criminal conviction on paternal involvement. This was analyzed using multiple regressions. To do so, an interaction term between relationship quality and each criminal conviction variable was created.

In three of the criminal conviction variables, the interaction terms were not significant, suggesting no support for moderation. The three interaction terms that were not significant were conviction dummy x relationship quality, conviction total x relationship quality, and felony conviction dummy x relationship quality. In felony conviction total, relationship quality was a significant moderator, but not in the hypothesized direction. In this model, those with felony conviction records and high relationship involvement had significantly lower levels of father involvement. Relationship quality did not help father involvement with fathers who had high number of felony conviction records; those with a lot of felony convictions, even with high relationship quality, still had lower father involvement.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

Overall, the four hypotheses proposed in this dissertation were not confirmed. Only one of the criminal conviction types was significant in the first hypothesis, but the addition of covariates caused that significant relationship to disappear. Out of the four criminal conviction types, a conviction record did impact relationship quality. However, this was not in the direction that was hypothesized. In this secondary sample, fathers who had a conviction record had higher relationship quality scores than fathers who did not have a conviction record.

The other three criminal conviction types were not statistically significantly correlated with relationship quality. The second hypothesis found no statistically significant difference in father involvement in fathers who had a criminal conviction and fathers who did not have a criminal record. Additionally, there were no significant difference in all four criminal record types. Since Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were not significant, by extension, Hypothesis 3 could not be significant and therefore relationship quality could not mediate father involvement for men who had a criminal conviction. Hypothesis 4 was also not significant. In three of the criminal conviction types, the interaction term was not significant, suggesting there was no support for moderation. In felony conviction total, relationship quality was a significant moderator but not in the hypothesized direction.

Employment and Income

Even though the hypotheses were not confirmed in this dissertation, findings still yield important information. The covariates, in particular employment and income, produced important implications. Within the Human Ecological Theory framework, it is vital to understand not only the individual in the environment, but the impact of the environment on the individual. Employment and income are variables help researchers to understand how the environment impacts these fathers. Consistent with the literature, a felony criminal conviction impacted employment and income for fathers in this secondary sample. Fathers with a felony conviction record were less likely to be employed and had lower incomes than fathers who did not have a felony conviction record. While the findings did not find a direct correlation between criminal conviction and father involvement, there was statistically significant correlation between employment and income with father involvement. In other words, employment and income are important variables for understanding the collateral consequences of criminal records.

Employment and income also had important implications for father involvement. Findings from this dissertation showed that fathers who were employed had higher incomes and had higher levels of father involvement than fathers who were not employed and had lower incomes. Fathers who are employed were also more likely to currently own or rent their own home, and are less likely to be receiving public assistance. This finding suggests the importance of finding fathers employment, as well as employment that provides a sufficient income. As a previous study found, fathers believed it was

important to provide financial contributions (Magnuson & Gibson-Davis, 2007) and fathers who were unemployed were at greatest risk for not seeing their children (Guzzo, 2009). Fathers who are not employed and/or do not have a higher income to provide for their children, may purposely choose to stay less involved with their children because they feel they are not able to full-fill what fathers consider an essential obligation. The father's limited resources within his environment impacts his children, which would be considered part of his network in the human ecological theory. Programs that assist low-income, unmarried fathers in finding employment as well as finding employment that pay wells may in turn improve father involvement.

Relationship Quality and Father Involvement

Findings from this dissertation confirmed previous literature regarding relationship quality and father involvement. Relationship quality between co-parents is correlated with father involvement (Dush, Kotila, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011; Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). Relationship quality and father involvement often go hand-in-hand. Findings from this dissertation illustrated a positive correlation between relationship quality and father involvement. However, because this a cross-sectional design, it cannot be determined if it was father involvement that led to better relationship quality or vice versa.

Given this finding and similar findings in other studies, it is important that programs and policies incorporate both co-parents when working with low-income unmarried parents. Programs that focus solely on providing services to the mother or to

the father may not be as effective as programs that incorporate both co-parents. These programs should focus on building and fostering healthy relationships between the co-parents as this will positively impact father involvement. Providing these services using a human ecological framework should also be utilized because effectively addressing relationship quality and father involvement is about the individual and their environment, which includes the other parent and their children.

Limitations

These findings have some limitations. First, the survey data on father involvement and relationship quality was self-reported data. Fathers may have reported higher levels of father involvement and relationship quality. There were no observations to confirm how involved they were with their children or what their relationship quality was like with the co-parent. Fathers who were in the control group in the parent study may have reported higher father involvement because they completed the pre-survey at court and may have felt that the parent project was a part of their court process (even though research assistants were explicit in saying the research is not part of their court case). Intervention fathers completed the pre survey during the first workshop and may have also felt compelled to report higher levels of father involvement. The survey is based solely on fathers' report and not reports from the children themselves. The analysis only incorporated father's self-report of relationship quality and father involvement. Mother's report or direct observations of these measures are not included in the analysis. Fathers

may have reported higher relationship quality or father involvement than mothers may have reported.

There may also be potential threats to external validity. A concern of external validity was to ensure the sample was representative, so that it can be generalized to other populations. Random sampling was used to address this threat.

Another limitation regards the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. There are many variables in the lives of these fathers and it may be difficult to say for certain what effect a criminal conviction has on relationship quality and father involvement. To address this concern, multivariate analysis was conducted that controlled for other variables. By controlling other variables, there is more confidence of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The secondary data was also unable to distinguish between fathers who have and have not been incarcerated. This dissertation was also not able to analyze the criminal conviction based on timing. Because of the incomplete date information in the criminal conviction data, analyses could not identify any effects of timing to explore if recent records impacted relationship quality and/or father involvement more so than records that occurred many years ago.

The sample does not include co-parents who were living together at the time they were applying for benefits. The co-parent court educators in the parent study felt that because they were already living together, they knew how to co-parent effectively. However, research findings in samples similar to the Hennepin County Co-Parent Court Project found low-income, unmarried parents often go through cycles of living together and not living together (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008). Since a cycle of living

together and not living together is common in other similar samples (Roy, Buckmiller, & McDowell, 2008), therefore, this sample may not be a true reflection of this low income, unmarried co-parent population. A final limitation is the cross-sectional design and examining data at one point in time. Because of this no conclusions could be made about causation.

Conclusion

This dissertation extends previous literature on criminal justice history, co-parenting, and father involvement in their children's lives. Most previous research in this area and with this population has been heavily drawn from the Fragile Families Data and only focuses on incarceration. The Hennepin County Co-Parent Court is a unique and novel data set that allows for comparison to to Fragile Families Data and aids in generalizing findings to similar populations. Very little research existed that examined the correlations between criminal conviction and relationship quality and father involvement before this study was conducted. More research is still needed in this area, especially given the high prevalence of criminal records as well as the role that relationship quality between parents has on father involvement in children's lives.

Research implications for this project focus on how a criminal conviction may impact co-parents' relationship quality and father involvement. This was important because research has shown that relationship quality and father involvement are correlated but no research has looked at this in individuals who have a criminal conviction (regardless of incarceration). Most of the limited research in this area focuses

solely on incarceration; few examine it by criminal conviction. Exploring the criminal conviction was important because of the high number of people who have a criminal conviction (especially for low-level offenses) and the racial disparities of those who have criminal conviction.

There are also implications for social workers providing direct service or advocating for public policy, as well as for criminal justice professionals. For individuals on probation or parole, community based programs might consider assisting with employment and helping individuals find jobs that provide sufficient income. Programs can also help fathers and their families navigate the challenges that result from a criminal record. This may lead to greater father involvement. Employers also have to also be willing to hire individuals with felony conviction records.

Incorporating both co-parents into programming may have long-term benefits for low-income, unmarried parents. Programs often only include one of the parents as seen in TANF programming and through the federally funded Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives. Programs like Co-Parent Court should strive to include both parents because having good relationship quality is important to father involvement and this will have long terms benefits for the father and his children.

In regards to policy, policy makers must consider and understand the potential ripple effects that criminal justice policies have on children and families. Policies intended for the individuals who have criminal records or are involved in the criminal justice system, impact the individuals *and* their families. Following this logic, employment policies that bar people with conviction records harm not only the fathers

but their children as well. Obstacles to education created by policies that limit (or in some cases bar) individuals with a criminal conviction to receive student loans should also be removed. This is crucial because level of education and employment and income are often highly correlated. These policies may have lasting impacts on not just the fathers but in the lives of their children. Finally, policy makers must also consider the larger consequences of these policies on communities of color, due to racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

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Table 1: Sample Characteristics

n = 237

Variables	<u>n</u> (%)
Education	
High School/GED	90 (38%)
Some College	69 (29%)
Two year/technical degree	15 (6.3%)
College	5 (2%)
Graduate Degree	1 (.4%)
No Degree	49 (21%)
Employment	
Employed (full or part-time)	110 (46%)
Unemployed	105 (44%)
Ever Homeless	
Yes	61 (26%)
No	161 (68%)
Current Housing	
Rent/Own	136 (57%)
Live with someone else/Public housing	94 (40%)
Public Assistance	
Yes	82 (35%)
No	146 (62%)
Mean Age	29 SD = 7.0
Mean Income	$8,238 SD = 13121

Table 2: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Fathers by Race

Variables	n	African American Fathers	Other Fathers
Employment (Full or Part-time)	107 out of 209	76 (37%)	31(15%)
History of Homelessness	59 out of 213	45 (21%)	14 (6%)
Currently Own/Rent	130 out of 221	92 (42%)	38 (17%)
Public Assistance	80 out of 222	63 (28%)	17 (7%)

Note. * African American is coded 1, other race is coded 0. Employment is coded 1, unemployed is coded 0. History of homelessness is coded 1, no history is coded 0. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes those who had a 1 for employment, those that had a 1 (or yes) for history of homelessness, a 1 for currently own/rent, and 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

p < .05

Table 3: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Fathers by Employment

		Employment	
Variables	n	Employed	Unemployed
History of Homelessness	52 out of 202	24 (12%)	28 (14%)
Currently Own/Rent	125 out of 210	72 (34%)*	53 (25%)
Public Assistance	71 out of 212	18 (8%)*	53 (25%)

Note. Employment is coded 1, unemployed is coded 0. History of homelessness is coded 1, no history is coded 0. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes those that had a 1 (or yes) for history of homelessness, a 1 for currently own/rent, and 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

*p < .05

Table 4: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics by History of Homelessness

| Variables | n | Homelessness | |
		History of Homelessness	No History of Homelessness
Currently Own/Rent	130 out of 222	18 (8.1)*	112 (51%)
Public Assistance	76 out of 215	31 (14%)*	45 (21%)

Note. History of homelessness is coded 1, no history is coded 0. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes those that had a 1 for currently own/rent, and 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

* $p < .05$

Table 5: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Fathers by Public Assistance

Variables	n	Current Housing Status	
		Rent/ Own	Live with Someone Else/Public Housing
Public Assistance	79 out of 223	33 (15%)*	46 (21%)

Note. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes those that had 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

* *p* < .05

Table 6: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Fathers with and without a Conviction

Variables	<u>n</u>	Conviction	
		Fathers with Conviction	Fathers without Conviction
Race (African Americans)	170 out of 226	121(79%)	49 (68%)
Employment (Full or Part-time)	110 out of 215	71 (49%)	39 (56%)
History of Homelessness	61 out of 222	48 (32%)	13 (19%)
Currently Own/Rent	136 out of 230	94 (60%)	42 (58%)
Public Assistance	82 out of 228	58 (37%)	24 (33%)

Note. African American is coded 1, other race is coded 0. Employment is coded 1, unemployed is coded 0. History of homelessness is coded 1, no history is coded 0. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes African Americans in race, those employed in employment, those that had a 1 (or yes) for history of homelessness, a 1 for currently own/rent, and 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

*$p < .05$

Table 7: Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Fathers with and without Felony Conviction

| | | Felony Conviction | |
| | | Fathers with Felony Conviction n (%) | Fathers without Felony Conviction n (%) |
Variables	n		
Race (African Americans)	170 out of 226	53 (84%)	117 (72%)
Employment (Full or Part-time)	110 out of 215	21 (35%)*	89 (57%)
History of Homelessness	61 out of 222	22 (34%)	39 (25%)
Currently Own/Rent	136 out of 230	35 (52%)	101 (62%)
Public Assistance	82 out of 228	33 (52%)*	49 (29%)

Note. African American is coded 1, other race is coded 0. Employment is coded 1, unemployed is coded 0. History of homelessness is coded 1, no history is coded 0. Owning and renting is coded 1, other is coded 0. Receiving public assistance is coded 1, not receiving public assistance is coded 0.

This table only includes African Americans in race, those employed in employment, those that had a 1 (or yes) for history of homelessness, a 1 for currently own/rent, and 1 for yes receiving public assistance.

Under n the second number represents the total number of survey participants who answered that survey item.

*$p < .05$

Table 8: Bivariate Correlations of Continuous Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Convictions Total						
2. Felony Convictions Total	.62**					
3. Age	.27**	.16**				
4. Education Level	.03	.00	.03			
5. Income	.02	-.20*	.23**	.30**		
6. Father Involvement	-.02	.04	-.04	.12	.13	
7. Parenting Alliance Measure	-.06	.09	.07	-.05	-.02	.32**

Note. *p < .05 , **p < .01

Table 9: Results of t-test and Continuous Variables by Conviction

Variables	Conviction Records						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Conviction			No Conviction					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	N			
Income	8,922	13795	88	7,034	11,881	150	-6489, 2713	-.811	136
Age	30	7.1	152	26	5.2	57	-6.5, -2.9	-5.2*	207
Education	12	1.1	157	12	1.0	72	-4.9, .10	-1.3	227
Total Number of Convictions	4.9	3.8	161	-	-	76	-5.4, -4.2	-18.4	235
Total Number of Felony Convictions	.79	1.2	161	-	-	76	.80,.09	-8.6	235
Parenting Alliance Measure	3.6	.83	159	3.4	.96	75	-.52, -.03	-2.3*	232
Father Involvement	3.5	1.1	150	3.4	1.2	73	-.34, .28	-.18	227

Note. *p < .05

Table 10: Results of t-test and Continuous Variables by Felony Conviction

| Variables | Felony Conviction Records | | | | | | 95% CI for Mean | | |
| | Felony Conviction | | | No Felony Conviction | | | | | |
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Income	$3,650	6,874	33	$9,680	14,265	105	2,393, 9,667	3.3*	136
Age	30	7.1	64	29	5.2	145	-3.5, .58	1.42	207
Education	12	1.0	66	12	1.1	163	.21, .32	.41	227
Total Number of Convictions	6.6	3.3	68	2.0	2.8	169	-5.4, -3.7	-10.0	235
Total Number of Felony Convictions	1.9	1.1	68	-	-	169	-2.1, -1.6	-14.1	235
Parenting Alliance Measure	3.7	.72	67	3.5	.93	167	-.45, .00	2.0*	232
Father Involvement	3.6	1.0	64	3.4	1.1	159	-.59, -.58	1.7	221

Note. *p* < .05

Table 11: Multiple Regression: PAM is Dependent Variable – Conviction Dummy is Focal Predictor

	B	SE	β
Race	.512	.215	.260*
Employment Status	.309	.202	.173
Current Housing Status	-.024	.210	-.013
History of Homelessness	-.103	.220	-.053
Age	.001	.015	.011
Education Level	-.074	.080	-.102
Income	-1.75	.000[1]	-.027
Public Assistance	-1.19	.230	-.060
Conviction (yes/no)	.224	.222	.116
R^2	.10		
F	1.01 (9,89)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 12: Multiple Regression: PAM is Dependent Variable – Conviction Total is Focal Predictor

	B	SE	β
Race	.497	.216	.253*
Employment Status	.259	.203	.145
Current Housing Status	.024	.208	.014
History of Homelessness	-.008	.212	-.004
Age	.009	.015	.067
Education Level	-.046	.080	-.063
Income	-1.71	.000[1]	-.026
Public Assistance	-.113	.231	-.057
Conviction Total	-.025	.029	-.092
R^2	.10		
F	1.01 (df = 9,89)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 13: Multiple Regression: PAM is Dependent Variable – Felony Conviction Dummy is Focal Predictor

	B	SE	β
Race	.506	.216	.257*
Employment Status	.290	.204	.162
Current Housing Status	.004	.210	.002
History of Homelessness	-.046	.219	-.023
Age	.006	.015	.048
Education Level	-.058	.079	-.081
Income	-1.52	.000[1]	-.023
Public Assistance	-.129	.231	-.065
Felony Conviction Dummy	.042	.228	-.065
R^2	.090		
F	.978 (df = 9,89)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 14: Multiple Regression: PAM is Dependent Variable – Felony Conviction Total is Focal Predictor

Variables	B	SE	β
Race	.505	.217	.257*
Employment Status	.284	.204	.159
Current Housing Status	.009	.210	.005
History of Homelessness	-.034	.217	.017
Age	.007	.015	.050
Education Level	-.058	.079	-.080
Income	-1.74	.000[1]	-.27
Public Assistance	-1.28	.233	-.064
Felony Conviction Total	-1.28	.233	-.064
R^2	.090		
F	.974 (df = 9,89)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

p < .05

**Table 15: Multiple Regression: Father Involvement is Dependent Variable –
Conviction Dummy is Focal Predictor**

	B	SE	β
Race	.684	.248	.297*
Employment Status	.690	.233	.324*
Current Housing Status	.155	.249	.073
History of Homelessness	.152	.259	.064
Age	.015	.018	.094
Education Level	.009	.096	.011
Income	5.99	.000[1]	.075
Public Assistance	.301	.271	.126
Conviction (yes/no)	-.127	.256	-.056
R^2	.198		
F	2.22 (9,81)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 16: Multiple Regression: Father Involvement is Dependent Variable – Conviction Total is Focal Predictor

	B	SE	β
Race	.685	.242	.297*
Employment Status	.635	.229	.298*
Current Housing Status	.195	.243	.091
History of Homelessness	.212	.248	.090
Age	.018	.017	.118
Education Level	.025	.093	.028
Income	5.01	.000[1]	.063
Public Assistance	.359	.265	.151
Conviction Total	-.069	.034	-.217
R^2	.235		
F	2.77 (df = 9,81)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 17: Multiple Regression: Father Involvement is Dependent Variable – Felony Conviction Dummy is Focal Predictor

	B	SE	β
Race	.692	.248	.300*
Employment Status	.732	.235	.343*
Current Housing Status	.112	.249	.052
History of Homelessness	.051	.262	.022
Age	.011	.017	.069
Education Level	-.003	.094	-.004
Income	6.89	.000[1]	.086
Public Assistance	.282	.271	.118
Felony Conviction Dummy	.219	.273	.088
R^2			
F	2.27 (df = 9,81)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 18: Multiple Regression: Father Involvement is Dependent Variable – Felony Conviction Total is Focal Predictor

Variables	B	SE	B
Race	.688	.249	.298*
Employment Status	.697	.235	.327*
Current Housing Status	.143	.250	.067
History of Homelessness	.125	.259	.053
Age	.012	.017	.077
Education Level	.001	.095	.001
Income	5.85	.000[1]	.073
Public Assistance	.312	.274	.131
Felony Conviction Total	-.015	.130	-.013
R^2	.192*		
F	2.19 (df = 9,81)		

Note. [1]The income coefficient and standard error should be interpreted with caution. The income variable was not removed because failure to adjust for income could lead to bias in the other coefficients in the model.

*p < .05

Table 19: Results of t-test and Continuous Variables by Race

Variables	Race						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	African American			Other					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	N			
Income	6,075	11449	95	13,805	15624	40	2247, 13,212	2.82*	132
Age	29	7.1	152	27	6.3	48	-4.6, -.07	-2.0	198
Education	12	1.1	170	12	.99	55	-.20, .46	.79	223
Total Number of Convictions	3.5	.70	170	2.45	3.16	56	-2.13, -.11	-2.2*	224
Total Number of Felony Convictions	.55	.98	170	.36	.98	56	-.49, .10	-1.3*	224
Parenting Alliance Measure	3.6	.88	168	3.3	.88	56	-.62, -.09	-2.64	232
Father Involvement	3.6	.88	168	3.3	.88	56	-.67, .01	-1.9	211

Note. *$p < .05$

Table 20: Results of t-test and Continuous Variables by Employment

| Variables | Employment | | | | | | 95% CI for Mean | | |
| | Employed | | | Unemployed | | | | | |
	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	Difference	t	df
Income	13597	1396	68	3188	10537	60	-14710, -6109	-4.79*	126
Age	29	6.3	97	28	7.4	93	-2.9, 1.1	-.90	188
Education	12	1.2	109	12	.97	104	-.61, -.04	-2.3	211
Total Number of Convictions	2.9	3.5	110	3.7	3.7	105	-.11, 1.8	1.8	213
Total Number of Felony Convictions	.36	.92	110	.70	1.1	105	.06, .62	2.4*	213
Parenting Alliance Measure	3.5	.96	110	3.5	.83	104	-.27, .22	-.20	212
Father Involvement	3.5	.99	104	3.3	1.2	99	-.48, .11	-4.8*	126

Note. *p < .05

Table 21: Multiple Regression PAM is Focal Predictor – Father Involvement is Dependent Variable

	B	SE	B
PAM	.428*	.121	.351
Race	.443	.242	.197
Employment Status	.563	.220	.264*
Current Housing Status	.131	.230	.061
History of Homelessness	.109	.232	.046
Age	.007	.016	.044
Education Level	.031	.088	.035
Income	7.71	.000	.097
Public Assistance	.368	.253	.154
R^2	.303		
F	3.91 (df = 9,81)		

Note. *p < .05

Appendix A

Copied from Co-Parent Court Survey
Parenting Alliance Measure
Parents often work together to raise their children even if they are not romantically involved with each other or married. The statements below describe what happens between you and your child's other parent. Select the response that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Select only one response for each statement.
Please select N/A (not applicable) for any statement that does not apply to you or your situation.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
My child's other parent enjoys being with our child						
During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be a good parent.						
When there is problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.						
My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child.						
My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to						

help take care of our child.					
Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to.					
My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child.					
My child's other parent and I agree on what our child and should not be permitted to do.					
I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him/her play with our child.					
My child's other parent knows how to handle children well.					
My child's other parent believes I am a good parent.					
My child's other parent makes my job					

of being a parent easier.					
My child's other parent is a good parent.					
My child's other parent sees our child in the same way I do.					
My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way.					
If our child needs to be punished, my child's parent and I usually agree on the type of punishment.					
I feel good about my child's other parent's judgment about what is right for our child.					
My child's other parent tells me I am a good parent.					
My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child.					

Appendix B

Copied from Co-Parent Court Survey
Father Involvement Measures
Listed below are some activities that fathers can do with/for their young children. For each item, check the answers which best describe how often you do the following activities (if you do not have primary custody of your child, answer based on how often you do these things when you see your child).
Please select N/A (not applicable) for any statement that does not apply to you or your situation.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often	N/A
Read, sing, talk to your child.						
Play with your child.						
Feed your child.						
Dress your child.						
Shop for your child.						
Take your child to medical appointment.						
Take your child to or pick him/her up from daycare/babysitter						