

2019

Reducing Recidivism in Gang Affiliated Offenders: An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach

Cassandra Pacheco
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Cassandra Pacheco

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Jessica Hart, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Sharon Xuereb, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Victoria Latifses, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Reducing Recidivism in Gang Affiliated Offenders: An Interpretative Phenomenological

Approach

by

Cassandra Pacheco

MSW, California State University Dominguez Hills, 2013

BS Psychology, California Polytechnic State University, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

Recidivism is a major social problem, as is gang membership. Gang membership has been shown to increase the risk of recidivism; however, there is a gap in the literature as to how gang-membership influences reentry experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals with reentry service providers. This study examined how a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations. An interpretative phenomenological analysis design was employed in this study. In-person, semistructured interviews were conducted with 5 participants who met inclusion criteria to facilitate an understanding of this population's reentry services. Analysis of the data resulted in 3 themes: negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang identity, influence of gang identity on reentry location, and appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation. The findings were then compared with current literature and the tenant of intersectionality as well as ecological systems theory to begin to develop implications for social change. Reentry service providers can use the findings of the study to develop interventions that address the pressures of gang membership on reentry, examine the impact of location on reentry, and develop ways to deliver services in a nonjudgmental and supportive way. Additionally, the results of this study set a foundation from which future research can further explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated individuals both in more focused qualitative studies and broader quantitative studies as well as how a gang identity impacts recidivism.

Reducing Recidivism in Gang Affiliated Offenders: An Interpretative Phenomenological
Approach

by

Cassandra Pacheco

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

May 2019

Dedication

I will keep this section short and sweet, unlike the other areas of this paper. I dedicate this dissertation to my children. I hope that I inspire all of you to follow your dreams. You kids will have a lifetime of inspirational messages from me, but I want to leave you all this one quote: “Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, at the risk of being narcissistic, I would like to acknowledge myself. I have overcome significant life barriers to complete this dissertation and I worked hard at this. I want to just say that without myself writing this dissertation then none of this would be possible. Okay, now on a more serious note, further acknowledgments.

I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Jessica Hart. Thank you for all your support. Not only did you provide feedback in a quick manner, but you were supportive throughout this entire process. I feel like we had a lot in common and that you were a perfect fit for me throughout this process. I am very grateful that the university matched me with you. You made this a pleasurable learning experience.

On the same note, my committee member, Dr. Sharon Xuereb, you were an essential part of this process. You were the methods expert and were able to provide the additional feedback needed for success. You always gave timely and supportive feedback. I am so glad you were assigned to my team.

To my family and friends, thank you to all of you who were able to support me in some way or another. There are too many to acknowledge individually but you know who you are. Without your help this would have been a much more difficult process. I hope this meets my life quote requirement: "If I can't do it at home, it can't be done."

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Question	8
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Nature of the Study.....	10
Definition of Key Terms.....	11
Assumptions.....	13
Scope and Delimitations	14
Limitations	15
Significance.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Literature Research Strategy.....	21
Databases Used.....	21
Keywords and Research Barriers.....	22
Theoretical Foundation.....	23

Intersectionality.....	23
Ecological Systems Theory.....	29
Application of Intersectionality and Systems Theory.....	32
Literature Review.....	39
Risk Factors for Recidivism.....	39
Protective Factors.....	45
Interaction of Dynamic Needs	47
Gang affiliated Reentry Population	48
Connecting the Pieces of the Reentry Puzzle	54
Summary	67
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	69
Introduction.....	69
Research Design and Rationale	69
Phenomenon of Study.....	70
Research Design.....	71
Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis	72
Role of the Researcher	75
Methodology	77
Participants.....	77
Instrumentation	80
Procedures	82
Data Analysis Plan.....	84

Issues of Trustworthiness.....	86
Ethical Procedures	88
Summary	89
Chapter 4: Results	91
Introduction.....	91
Setting.....	92
Demographics	92
Data Collection	93
Data Analysis	94
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	95
Results.....	96
Theme 1: Negative Experiences in Relation to Interactions with Others	
Based on Gang-Identity	97
Theme 2: Influence of Gang-Identity on Reentry Location.....	101
Theme 3: Appreciation of Support Received Despite Gang-Affiliation	104
Summary	105
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	107
Introduction.....	107
Interpretation of the Findings.....	107
Negative Experiences in Relation to Interactions with Others Based on	
Gang-Identity	108
Influence of Gang-identity on Reentry Location	109

Appreciation of Support Received Despite Gang-affiliation.....	111
Intersectionality.....	111
Ecological Systems Theory.....	113
Limitations to the Study.....	115
Recommendations.....	117
Implications.....	119
Summary.....	122
References.....	124
Appendix: Debrief Sheet.....	138

List of Tables

Table 1. Themes and Subthemes 95

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Recidivism is a major social problem, with a high direct and indirect cost on society. Risk factors for recidivism are dynamic, and include childhood, individual, and environmental factors (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018; Gunnison, Helfgott, & Wilhelm, 2015; Hlavka, Wheelock, & Jones, 2015; Houser, McCord, & Nicholson, 2018; Kopak & Frost, 2017; Lockwood, Nally, & Taiping, 2017; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; Ward & Fortune, 2016). For this reason, it is essential to utilize a systems approach when viewing recidivism risks. Additionally, there are many different types of identities that interact to form a person's sense of self, and these identities interact to create a systematic level of either oppression or power (Moradi, 2017; Windsong, 2018).

Marginalized populations are disproportionality represented in the criminal justice system (Wesely & Miller, 2018; Windsong, 2018). Therefore, it is also important to incorporate intersectionality into a research model to incorporate the voices of the oppressed, an aspect that is sorely missing from current criminal justice research. Current research has found that alternative sentencing models, so long as they incorporate treatment, are more effective than incarceration and that coordinated care can help to meet the dynamic needs of the reentry population (DeVall, Lanier, Hartmann, Williamson, & Askew, 2017). Having a gang affiliated identity can shape reentry experiences in several ways, such as adding another level of stigma as well as increased risk to recidivate (Bender, Cobbina, & McGarrell, 2016). However, there has been

minimal research on how a gang identity impacts reentry experiences as well as how to best address the multiple risk factors in rehabilitation of the gang affiliated reentry individual.

Background

In this section, I provide a review of selected articles related to the reentry population and areas, such as risk factors for recidivism, service needs, identity formation, and intervention evaluations, to assist in justifying the need for this study. Gunnison et al. (2015) identified that the barriers to successful reentry are lack of employment, unstable housing, medical and mental health issues, addiction, and lack of social support. Meanwhile, Parent, Laurier, Guay, and Fredette (2016) found that it is the interaction between individual and environmental risk factors that influences the chances of recidivism. Wolff and Baglivio (2015) found that when risk factors interact, they were a much more accurate predictor of engaging in crime than any one risk factor alone. Therefore, it is the combination of the previously mentioned risk factors and the way that they interact with each other that can impact the chances of recidivism.

Gang affiliated individuals are likely to experience increased stigma because they are often identified as both an ex-offender and a gang member, which can impact their reentry process (Bender et al., 2016). Tyler and Brockermann (2017) identified that the intersection of socially defined stigmatizing identities (e.g., race and gender) can influence an individual's interactions with the reentry programs. Goldman, Giles, and Hogg (2014) stated that gang involvement created a social identity construct that became a part of how a gang member views themselves and interactions with others. These

researchers' findings highlight the need to further explore how intersectionality impacts access to community systems.

Although there are many barriers that can hinder a successful reentry, researchers have also identified protective factors against recidivism. Tarpey and Friend (2016) reported that recidivism is reduced by a combination of having your basic needs met (e.g., shelter and employment) and having the commitment to change, access to prosocial activities, and positive social influences. Berg and Cobbina (2017) found that the cognitive process and commitment to change were major protective factors against recidivism. Similar to risk factors, it is the interaction of protective factors that enhances the reentry populations chances of avoiding recidivism; however, further information regarding effective reentry programming, such as how to engage individuals, best practice treatment modalities, and differences between gang affiliated and civilian reentry population programming, needs to be better understood to guide best practices.

Gang affiliated individuals need to be approached in a manner that increases engagement in services. Chalas and Grekul (2017) conducted a qualitative study on ways to engage gang affiliated individuals in reentry services by looking at the reasons that people join, stay, and leave gangs. Their findings highlighted the complexity of gang involvement and barriers to leaving a gang, which can have a major impact on recidivism rates for this population. Meanwhile, Weinrath, Donatelli, and Murchison (2016) found that mentorship by previous gang affiliated individuals reduced the recidivism rates of program participants. Zortman, Powers, Hiester, Klunk, and Antonio (2016) reported that recidivism is most effectively reduced by addressing all the interacting needs of the

individual in a systems approach-type style. The results of these studies highlight the need to further explore gang affiliated offenders' reentry program needs to effectively work with this group in reducing recidivism rates.

Problem Statement

Incarceration is an expensive problem; it costs taxpayers money, disrupts families, and impacts community systems (DeHart, Shapiro, & Clone, 2018; Ritzer, 2004). It costs about \$88 dollars a day to incarcerate an individual (National Institute of Justice, 2014); however, this does not account for the indirect costs of incarceration. There is the impact on the victims, the cost of crime on the neighborhood, the impact of criminal behavior on the economy, the financial and psychological impact on family, and the impact of incarceration on the individual once released (DeHart et al., 2018; Ritzer, 2004). Ritzer (2004) stated that criminal behavior can affect a community's infrastructure by impacting local businesses, esthetics, and the overall culture of the community. Crime in communities attracts more crime, creating a cycle of poverty and violence that impacts all residents (Ritter, 2004). Individuals who are incarcerated are not generating income while costing society money, which can have a major impact on the economy long term (Ritzer, 2004). Individuals who are incarcerated often have children or families who may use public assistance to supplement for the loss of income provided by the incarcerated individual or have barriers to employment, such as lack of childcare (Amani et al., 2018; DeHart et al., 2018). According to DeHart et al. (2018), this can create stress on a family unit, with the partner also lacking the emotional support of a second parent. Additionally, children with an incarcerated family member are more likely to become offenders in the

future (Shapiro & DeHart, 2017). Even when released, the impact of incarceration still follows an individual. They face issues such as stigma, barriers to obtaining housing and employment, the stress of juggling probation and/or parole requirements, and a lack of privacy (Martin, 2016; Peterson & Panfil, 2017).

Along with the issue of incarceration comes the topic of recidivism. According to Drake (2018), about 5 million individuals were under justice system community supervision in 2014. Approximately two thirds of the reentry population reoffends within 3 years, with over half of these reoffenders committing crimes within the first year (National Institute of Justice, 2014). Since recidivism rates are high, this problem has a large impact on society, which highlights the need for further understanding of its risk factors. There are both personal and environmental risk factors for recidivism. Personal risk factors can include personality characteristics, mental illness, substance abuse, disability, and lack of family support (Berg & Cobbina, 2017; Datchi, Barretti, & Thompson, 2016; Gunnison et al., 2015; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Ward & Fortune, 2016). Environmental risk factors can include low income neighborhoods, associating with deviant peers, family patterns of incarceration, and cultural influences (Baglivio, Wolff, Jackowski, & Greenwald, 2017; Folk et al., 2018; Gunnison et al., 2015; Houser et al., 2018; Ojha, Pape, & Burek, 2018; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockermann, 2017; Ward & Fortune, 2016). Risk factors for recidivism are not mutually exclusive; they often crossover into other domains which can make interventions more difficult (Baglivio et al., 2017; Breetzke & Polaschek, 2018; Ward & Fortune, 2016). The reentry population

has high needs and there are sparse resources available creating a double bind (Tarpey & Friend, 2016).

One subgroup of this high-needs group is the gang affiliated reentry individuals, which has followed a trend of increased membership. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.) estimated there were approximately 1.4 million gang members in 2011. Gangs are located both in prisons and in the street, making gang involvement a major issue for the correctional system. Gang membership is often higher in low income neighborhoods, and neighborhoods that are also beset with crime, which is often instigated by the gangs (Houser et al., 2018; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). Furthermore, gangs create a culture of deviant behavior, which can then trickle down to the younger members of a community who may see deviant behavior as a way to accomplish power through fear (Lockwood et al., 2017).

With gang membership rising and gang involvement often occurring in an environment with several other risk factors for criminal behavior, gang membership is a major social problem that essentially goes hand-and-hand with recidivism. As the Department of Justice (2011) stated, there is both a collective internal cognitive identity development process as well as an external visual identity that can impact how the individual interacts with others, including interaction with reentry services. A gang identity can impact how an individual is perceived by others, resulting in potential mistreatment and barriers to achieving conventional goals (Dooley, Seals, & Skarbek, 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). This type of identity can result in systematic oppression of the gang affiliated reentry offender, which can result in higher rates of recidivism and

increased barriers to rehabilitation interventions for this population (Goldman et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017; Spooner, Pyrooz, Webb, & Fox, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. Given that both gang involvement and recidivism are major social problems, there was a need to gain further insight into the unique population of gang affiliated reentry individuals to facilitate positive social change. This insight can be utilized to tailor best practice interventions to meet the dynamic needs of this population. While there is a significant amount of research regarding different aspects of recidivism as well as information regarding gang membership, there is minimal research on the impact that a gang identity has on the intersection of individuals' other identities (Goldman et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). While it is known that there are primary and secondary barriers to reentry, there is a gap regarding how an individual's reentry experiences are shaped by their identity and those interactions with the social environment (Parent et al., 2016; Peterson & Panfil, 2017; Ward & Fortune, 2016).

I used an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) to explore the gang affiliated reentry populations' experiences and the ways in which they assign meaning to those experiences (see Hlavka et al., 2015; Storey, 2017; Windsong, 2018). With this study, I addressed a gap in current research identified by Caudill (2010), Dooley et al. (2014), Peterson and Panfil (2017), and Spooner et al. (2017). They recommended that further research be conducted regarding gang affiliated reentry individuals while also incorporating gaps found in the research in relation to looking at the intersectionality of

identities on the experiences and interactions of internal and environmental factors of recidivism (Abate & Venta, 2018; Martin, 2016; Owusu-Bempah, 2017; Parent et al., 2016; Patten et al., 2018; Steinmetz & Henderson, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; Upadhyayula et al., 2017; Vigessaa, Bergseth, & Richardson Jens, 2016; Ward & Fortune, 2016; Wesely & Miller, 2018).

Research Question

How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations?

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality is a term that describes the way in which different identities interact with each other to form a person's complete identity (Moradi, 2017). This identity can not only shape how individuals view themselves, but how society perceives the individual. Moradi (2017) described how someone is labeled and perceived by others based upon their appearance can shape their interactions with others and influence how that individual sees others, in an almost cyclical relationship. This then shapes the way society develops with these groups to create either privilege or oppression (Moradi, 2017).

According to Tyler and Brockmann (2017), intersectionality applies to the reentry population in a way that increases the stigma they experience. Often the label of being an offender impacts how other people view someone, resulting in increased oppression and decreased opportunities for advancement (Ward & Fortune, 2016). Researchers (e.g., Parent et al., 2016; Steffensmeier, Painter-Davis, & Ulmer, 2017; Tarpey & Friend, 2016;

Tyler & Brockmann, 2017) have shown that many marginalized groups are often more likely to be incarcerated (e.g., ethnic minorities, impoverished families, individuals with physical or mental health issues, people with addiction, etc.). This trend often influences how the criminal justice system can interact with these groups in a way that created oppression (Steffensmeier et al., 2017). These groups have experienced layer-upon-layer of oppression and gaining insight through the voices of these marginalized populations can assist in learning more about how their interactions with the criminal justice system shape their experiences of systemic oppression.

While intersectionality focuses on the individual's unique combination of identities and how they both influence and are influenced by the social environment, reentry literature also needs to be a focus on recidivism protective factors that exist within that social environment. Research has shown that successful reentry is influenced by many factors, such as family and peer influence, access to treatment services, employment, and stable housing (Parent et al., 2016; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017). The ecological systems theory examines how the individual and their own unique qualities are impacted by the interaction of different aspects of their environment, such as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems (Burns, Warmbold-Brann, & Zaslofsky, 2015). This theory applies to how the interactions of all the factors in the environment impact the reentry experiences of individuals. This framework can assist in looking at the services being provided and other environmental and social factors that influence the experiences of the reentry population to reduce recidivism. While previous researchers have shown that both individual and

environmental factors influence recidivism rates, given how the intersection of an individual's identity influences their interactions with the social environment, it is essential to view recidivism through the lens of intersectionality to gain insight into the individual risk factors and how those, in turn, simultaneously influence and are influenced by the social environment as viewed by a combined intersectionality-systems theory approach.

Nature of the Study

The study was qualitative in nature because I used an IPA approach. IPA allows the researcher to explore participant experiences, the meanings attributed to those experiences, and the psychological process of how those meanings are established (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Storey, 2007). This approach works well with intersectionality and systems theory because these theories can be applied to how an individual establishes the meaning of these experiences (see Storey, 2007). The gang affiliated reentry population has a unique set of experiences, and identities that can shape their experiences and give a unique meaning to these experiences. Due to the limited amount of research in this area and complexity of how unique each participant's intersecting identities are, a qualitative research method was most suitable to achieving the purpose of the study. Holding an open dialogue with participants and asking questions that included not only their own identity but experiences with other labels assisted me in gaining insights not only into potential identities and their interactions but how they may have impacted the participants' experiences. Researchers have shown that there are many different factors that impact recidivism and successful reentry (Bender et al., 2016;

Gunnison et.al., 2015; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; Zortman et al., 2016); however, the gap addressed in this study was how the different factors intersect to create the collective experiences of gang affiliated individuals. For this reason, I chose a qualitative IPA research methodology to allow for the conduction of semistructured interviews to explore participants' gang affiliated reentry experiences.

Definition of Key Terms

Gang affiliated: refers to anyone who is or has been associated with a gang. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2011) defined a gang as:

an association of three or more individuals; whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity, which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti; the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives; its members engage in criminal activity, with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation, or economic resources." (p.n.a.)

Gender: External male and female identifiers visible to others and the roles and generalizations that go along with the physical appearance (Moradi, 2017).

Intersectionality: The unique combination of identities in which a person either identifies with or that others identify them as (Moradi, 2017; Windsong, 2018). These

intersecting identities place individuals in a specific location, of either oppression or privilege (Moradi, 2017).

Marginalized populations: Groups of people who share a common identifier and are often oppressed due to these common identifiers (Windsong, 2018).

Oppression: Differential, unfair treatment that creates a power dynamic based upon weakness, often by limiting available opportunities (Moradi, 2017).

Privilege: Direct and indirect benefits that are unearned, based solely on physical appearance matching the group in power, rather than based upon merit or capability (Moradi, 2017; Windsong, 2018).

Race: The physical characteristics and/or identifying markers that serve to categorize individuals into groups (Moradi, 2017) as well as the socially constructed stereotypes and role expectations that go along with this group (Windsong, 2018).

Recidivism: “A person’s relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person receives sanctions or undergoes intervention for a previous crime” (National Institute of Justice, 2014, p.n.a.).

Reentry: The transition from incarceration back into the community (National Institute of Justice, 2014). There are many different types of reentry services such as probation/parole, house arrest, halfway houses, community service agencies, inpatient, and outpatient treatment (National Institute of Justice, 2014).

Socioeconomic status: A person’s social location based upon income: lower, middle, or upper class (Moradi, 2017).

Systems: Different entities (e.g., family, culture, social service agencies, etc.) and the way in which they interact with the individual (Neal & Neal, 2013). Systems can include groups of people as well as abstract ideas (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is important to note that systems can also be socially constructed. In this study, gangs were considered a system (both in a group sense as well as a cultural identity) and to have an influential effect on the individual and their life trajectory (see Bergen-Cico, Haygood-El, Jennings-Bey, & Lane, 2014).

Assumptions

One major assumption I held in this study, which was described by Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol (2016), is that individuals can differentiate and identify which levels they are being discriminated on. This can come into play when a person is providing their narrative because they may feel discrimination but may not be able to identify which identity, or combination of identities, are the ones that are influencing their experiences at the time. This can be especially true since society may assign an individual a label that they may not identify with. Therefore, I assumed that participants had a level of insight necessary to differentiate their experiences based upon how people may be responding to their identity and were aware of how they present to others.

I also assumed that these labels are socially constructed, that they are assigned by the privileged group, and that they cross over to multiple domains in order influence interactions and continue to create oppression for the marginalized groups (see Windsong, 2018). Therefore, group identity had to be explored both on a societal level as well as how the individual made meaning of their own identity. This assumption relates

to the belief that appearance is associated with the assigned labels and that others actively react and respond to these labels (Windsong, 2018).

This led to the next assumption which was that the group of privilege is White, male, heterosexual, wealthy, and educated (see Windsong, 2018). This group has created the current research narrative, and their voices have shaped the direction of society to maintain their privilege (Moradi, 2017; Windsong, 2018). There then becomes an assumption that gang affiliated reentry individuals have different reentry experiences based upon their appearance, it was also assumed that they are assigned a gang-related label by society based upon their appearance. People were assumed to react differently to people based upon the identities they assign to others, which shapes the receiving party's experiences.

Since the interviews required self-reporting, there was also a concern that the participants may not have been fully forthcoming or self-aware of their own experiences. They may have been influenced to either respond in a socially acceptable manner or in a way that attempted to report what they perceived that I wanted to hear for this study. Therefore, I assumed that through building rapport with the participants that they were honest about their experiences and that my identity did not have a significant impact on how the participants reported their experiences. I also assumed that the participants did not embellish or diminish their stories when they communicated them to me.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study centered around gang affiliated reentry individuals. The participants were all adults, who were gang affiliated, had a criminal history, and had

been incarcerated. The participants were also likely be using some type of community rehabilitation services. All participants resided in California, which created a unique cultural dynamic; therefore, their experiences may not have been similar in other geographical regions. Additionally, because my recruitment methods did not target vulnerable populations (i.e., pregnant women, those with physical or mental illnesses, etc.), I did not explore how these identities impacted the participants' intersectionality in this study.

While the inclusion criteria appear to create a large population, due to the nature of the study, the criteria actually only applied to a smaller subgroup of participants. Additionally, I focused on the experiences of these individuals and how their identities shaped their interpretations of their interactions with social systems and did not look at the myriad of other reentry issues that impact gang affiliated reentry individuals. Therefore, the results of this study only represented the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals in California.

Limitations

One major limitation to this study was the lack of generalizability. Since the study was qualitative and exploratory with a small sample size, the findings may not be similar across other geographical areas or they may not be replicated in a larger quantitative study. However, the findings are still beneficial because they can help to guide future research.

The sampling method may have also been a limitation. Since the participants were all likely participating in some type of reentry services in some manner, there may also

have been a bias related to their mindset and motivation for change. Their experiences may be different from those who do not receive any types of services or community monitoring. The participants' willingness to share their experiences may have been due to them having stronger opinions and experiences. This could have shaped the findings of the study because they may not reflect the experiences of gang affiliated reentry population. However, the study is still an invaluable source of information on the topic.

Another potential major limitation was my own intersectionality as the researcher and how that could have shaped the responses of the participants. To address this, I established rapport with participants to establish a safe space in which they could share their experiences. Some participants may not have been as comfortable sharing their experiences with someone who was not of a similar background as them, due to feeling a lack of connection or inability for me to understand. I attempted to address this possible limitation by creating a semistructured interview protocol in which I established rapport with the participants. Given that the design was qualitative, this type of influence was unavoidable, as was the risk of my own inherent bias coming into play. It is important for the researcher to be aware of their own biases and to use self-reflection when conducting research to avoid misinterpreting the data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Qualitative data are subjective; therefore, as a research methodology, it is less valid and reliable than alternative methods (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data had the benefit of allowing me to explore the experiences of the gang affiliated reentry population in depth, which was helpful because my findings can be used to shape and guide further research.

Significance

The significance of this study was that the results can be used to begin to fill the research gap in relation to a lack of information on gang affiliated reentry individuals. By gaining insight into the experience of the gang affiliated reentry population and the interaction of their identities concerning how they are perceived by the social environment, service providers can better interact and support this population. Zortman et al. (2016) reported that positive interactions with service providers and appropriate levels of follow through can increase engagement in services. A person interprets their experiences based on past experiences, such as previous interactions with reentry service providers (Moradi, 2017). By increasing the awareness of this population's interpretations and interactions, it can assist in increasing the quality of engagement in services and assisting others to interact with this population.

Additionally, gaining a further understanding of how the different barriers interact and influence each other can also assist in helping to improve programs and prioritize needs to focus on a system-based approach to reentry. Focusing on how different barriers interact to create a risk of recidivism can influence intervention programs to provide the services in a way to help provide the most stability for the reentry program. Researchers have demonstrated that early intervention, community/family support, cognitive treatment process, and access to supportive services can independently reduce the chances of recidivism (Berg & Cobbina, 2017; Chalas & Grekul, 2017; Lee, Guilamo-Ramos, Muñoz-Laboy, Lotz, & Bornheimer, 2016; Tarpey & Friend, 2016). The results of this study added to the current body of knowledge surrounding the topics of reducing

recidivism while gaining further insight into the impact intersectionality has on systematic protective factors for the gang affiliated reentry population. By further exploring this population's experiences with community systems, the findings of this study present valuable insights to assist professionals in providing quality services to this population that can assist in reducing the social problem of recidivism.

Summary

There is a significant amount of research regarding the risk factors and treatment interventions of recidivism that attempt to guide best practice; however, recidivism is still a major problem. Researchers have found that while individual and environmental risk factors have a major impact on recidivism, it is the interaction of these that influence recidivism rates (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). There has been a call to incorporate intersectionality into criminal justice research to begin to develop the voices of the marginalized populations (Martin, 2016; Wesely & Miller, 2018; Willison & O'Brien, 2016; Windsong, 2018). In this study, I used a systems theory and intersectionality approach to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals to fill the gap in research regarding how their intersecting identities impact their experiences with reentry services.

The purpose of the study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. I used an IPA methodology to explore how these individuals assign meaning to their reentry experiences. Key terms were defined in this chapter to provide continuity throughout the study. In the next chapter, I will provide a thorough review of

literature and the justification for the study through a strong development of a research gap.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Recidivism is a major social problem, with approximately 76% of individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system reoffending within 5 years and half of that population reoffending within the first year (National Institute of Justice, 2014). Often, the cycle of recidivism is multigenerational and is influenced by many different psychosocial and environmental factors (Tyler & Brockmann, 2017). These factors all come with their own unique set of stigmas that interact with each other in ways that impact individual identity formation and influence the individual's interactions with the environment (Tyler & Brockmann, 2017). The struggles for the reentry population can be more difficult for gang affiliated individuals because they already have an established identity in the neighborhood to which they are returning (Bender et al., 2016). This type of identity is often both internal and external because gang membership is often a cognitive representation of themselves as well as visible to others through specific physical appearance (Bender et al., 2016). According to Tyler and Broackmann (2017), a gang identity intersects with the individual's other identities, such as their race, gender, and age, to impact their view of self as well as how others in the social environment interact with them. This intersection of identities can create systematic barriers to reentry services that can reduce the person's risk of recidivism (Tyler & Brockmann, 2017).

To gain knowledge on the current body of research to this topic, I conducted a thorough review of the literature. In this chapter, background information on the theoretical framework of intersectionality and systems theory are explored to assist the

reader in gaining a strong understanding of the theory. Each theory is then applied to the issue of recidivism amongst the gang affiliated reentry population and an explanation of the combination of theoretical lenses is provided.

I will thoroughly explore the issue of recidivism in this chapter as well as discuss the risk and protective factors in detail to foster understanding of the topic. The population of gang members will be explored to provide context regarding reasons for joining gangs and gang culture. I will also discuss the unique population of gang affiliated reentry population needs and experiences to develop the connections between the two social problems. I conducted an analysis of the literature to determine the strength of the research being reviewed and to locate gaps to justify the need for the current study.

Literature Research Strategy

Databases Used

I searched the following databases to locate extant literature on the topic under study:

- **PsychoINFO:** This database, run by the American Psychological Association (APA), contains peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and dissertations. It is one of the largest databases dedicated to psychological literature per Walden.
- **SocINDEX:** This database contains peer-reviewed articles, books, and conference papers in sociological fields such as criminal justice.
- **PsychARTICLES:** This database contains peer-reviewed articles available through the APA.

- SAGEJournals: This database contains full journal articles related to psychology and is often linked to articles that only have abstracts in the previously listed databases.

Keywords and Research Barriers

My initial search began with a broad scope as I searched for articles related to recidivism using the key terms: *recidivism, reentry, crime, offenders, intersectionality, gangs, gang membership, systems theory, and incarceration*. The key terms of *intersectionality* and *systems theory* were combined with *recidivism, reentry, gang,* and *crime* to narrow down the search to include the theory applicable to the main topics. The key term *gang* was also combined with *reentry, recidivism,* and *identity*. Subterms, such as *risk factors, protective factors, impact, community, reducing, family,* and *causes,* were then combined with the initial key terms to assist in narrowing down the literature to locate scholarly articles that were related to the specific problem addressed by the study. I set all searches to include articles published within the last 5 years; however, some of the theory and base literature was exempt from this time constraint because the background information was necessary to lay the foundation for current literature.

One major barrier in relation to the literature review was separate youth and adult studies. There appears to have been a trend of interest in youth recidivism and youth gang membership, resulting in less research that focused on adult offenders. While some of the information does crossover, there are times when it was not appropriate to use literature about youth. To address this barrier, I used research article references to help guide the literature search to encompass a thorough review of all current literature.

Theoretical Foundation

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a tenet developed to address the impact that the interaction of multiple identities has on a person's experiences of either oppression or privilege (Moradi, 2017). One of the benefits of intersectionality is its ability to highlight the unique experiences of individuals based upon their actual and perceived identities. Intersectionality can be visualized as a Venn diagram with different identities, such as race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual identity, and many other identities, filling each circle. Intersectionality is often used to view topics, such as health, human rights, and psychology, in which there are group disparities (Moradi, 2017). Issues of race have been long standing in the United States, creating a system of power and oppression that can be viewed through incorporating intersectionality into research (Savas, 2014). Marginalized populations have been oppressed, and those in power have developed social systems, such as the criminal justice system, that indirectly contribute to the maintenance of oppression through bias (Savas, 2014).

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system, resulting in a type of systematic oppression that continues upon release (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol (2016) described issues of racial profiling and sentence discrepancies as prime examples of oppression by the justice system, viewing bias in the criminal justice system as an indirect consequence of a power dynamic stemming from the 1600s. The institutional oppression of the justice system started with slavery and then segregation, creating a socially constructed belief

that African Americans are less human than White Americans (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). Culture and time have shaped this narrative; however, this is a way in which the legal system is used to continue the social constructed inequality. Inequality does not apply solely to African Americans because Latinos are also overrepresented in the justice system; they have a similar but different set of experiences regarding racial profiling and mistreatment (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). These social constructed labels create stigma that impact how others view and interact the individual, how the individual views themselves, and how the individual interacts with others (Moradi, 2017; Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). These experiences are shaped by the intersecting identities, often becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy that reinforces beliefs (Harris, 2017). That being said, not every individual experiences the same level of discrimination because different peoples' experiences are unique and often reflect their social location (Moradi, 2017). To best understand the impact intersectionality has on oppression and power, the issues of social privilege and oppression in relation to race, gender, disability (i.e., mental and physical), and gang identity must be examined; however, there are many more levels of identity that exist, such as age and socioeconomic status, which follow the same patterns of interactive oppression.

While gender and race are apparent and impactful identifiers, intersectionality looks at many others, including but not limited to: socioeconomic status, education, age, sexual identity, and disability including mental health and substance abuse struggles (Moradi, 2017). Race, gender, and class intersect to significantly impact stereotypes and the treatment of these marginalized individuals in the justice system (Wesely & Miller,

2018). These identities place a person on a trajectory of either privilege or power, with the intersections assisting to provide the individual with their own specific location.

Most of these marginalizing and oppressed identities are found in the average gang affiliated reentry population, such as low income, lower education, and minority status, which is why viewing reentry experiences through a lens of intersectionality is appropriate for this specific population. Windsong (2018) stated that to incorporate intersectionality into research, the researcher must utilize the following assumptions: “moving away from additive thinking, relationality, and social constructionism” (p. 135). Historically, identities of oppression have been added up, such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, and sexual identity; however, this provides a disservice to these individuals because it is the interconnections of identities that impact their systematic oppression (Windsong, 2018). Additionally, individuals do not often recognize how their internalized thoughts may influence their interactions with other groups and their experiences of power and oppression (Windsong, 2018).

Intersectionality also needs to explore the definitions of both the oppressed and privileged groups, such as the definitions of feminism and masculinity simultaneously (Windsong, 2018). Windsong (2018) also discussed the need to acknowledge the social construction of categories, such as gender and race, and the views and roles/norms based upon these constructs. Martin (2016) stated that there needs to be a focus on intersectionality in criminal justice research, in order to shift the view toward understanding the multiple levels of oppression experienced by marginalized populations because the current narrative has been constructed by the group in power, those who are

also responsible for the offender's oppression. Additionally, Peterson and Panfil (2017) stated that although their study involved women, they recommended utilizing an intersectionality framework to explore gang membership on a broader level because it offers a valuable view of the issues of gang involvement.

Gang affiliated individuals are a group that experiences significant amounts of discrimination based upon physical appearance and preconceived societal bias. Goldman et al. (2014) stated that appearing to be gang affiliated can impact an individual's access to employment, housing, and result in profiling in the community (i.e., police, grocery stores, civilians, etc.). Society often identifies characteristics of a gang member, such as the color of their skin, tattoos, attire, the way they communicate, and how they present themselves (Goldman et al., 2014). This type of appearance shapes how people see the individual and how they treat them, which creates a response pattern for the individual that eventually comes before the treatment (Grossi, 2017; Harris, 2017). Over time, even if a person wants to change their situation, these types of appearances can create a type of double jeopardy, where it becomes difficult to follow a conventional trajectory due to societal barriers in place (Grossi, 2017).

While all the above types of discrimination have significant amounts of oppression, to limit the experiences of these marginalized population to focus solely on one type of discrimination discredits their experiences. Examining the ways in which all of these different identities interact to create a spot for the individual on the oppression power spectrum helps to gain insight into the individuals' reciprocal experiences with the social environment (Harris, 2017). Intersectionality is a lens from which to view the

interaction of identities, how a person's experiences are shaped by their identities, and how an individual's experiences shape the way they interpret future experiences (Martin, 2016).

Scurich and Monahan (2016) explored public views regarding using categorical markers (i.e., ethnicity, gender, and age) to decide sentencing lengths and found that about 25% of participants were supportive of using race, 50% for gender differences (i.e., females less time than males), and 75% for age disparity (i.e., shorter sentences for older offenders). However, other scholars have stated that using these risk factors to differentiate sentences is unethical and leads to further oppression by the justice system because it ignores other risk factors that are disproportionately represented in the justice system (Scurich & Monahan, 2016). Differential sentencing based upon race, gender, and age highlights the need to view recidivism through an intersectionality framework. Using an intersectionality lens can also impact researchers and readers by forcing them to explore their own bias and assumptions regarding the target population, facilitating reconstruction of the overall narrative (Martin, 2016).

The narrative will be told from the voices of the marginalized populations, a viewpoint that often gets overlooked in conventional research methods that were developed and normed on the privileged population, which can overlook critical aspects of the individuals' experiences (Martin, 2016). For example, Schaefer (2016) found that risk for recidivism stemmed from offending as a way of externalizing frustration regarding differential power among groups as well as a normalization of criminal justice punishments, essentially learned conditioning developed while spending time within the

system. However, while the sample focused on sex offenders (who tend to spend longer terms in prison), it is likely that prison sentences would impact the gang affiliated reentry individual's reentry experience, as gang enhancements can add higher time and time spent in prison can strengthen pro gang attitudes and behaviors (Grossi, 2017). Therefore, low rates of life achievements (or perceptions of ability to achieve) combined with high frequency of exposure to criminal justice sanctions increased risk of recidivism by impacting an individual's cognitive commitment toward rehabilitation (Schaefer, 2016). Marginalized populations have less life opportunity than the mainstream white group in power, resulting in this group having overall less achievement for these groups (Savas, 2014).

On the other side, having a strong sense of ethnic pride has been found to reduce recidivism (Upadhyayula, Ramaswamy, Chalise, Daniels, & Freudenberg, 2017). In a study conducted by Wesely and Miller (2018) the experiences of ethnic minority women in the justice system were explored. The researchers found that almost all participants made meaning of their experiences with discrimination to be a result of the connection between their race and gender. Also, this discrimination stemmed from visible physical identifiers, therefore there was a lack of control over how they were perceived and treated by social systems, influencing their rehabilitation services (Wesely & Miller, 2018). Participants utilized their identities to shape how they made meaning of their incarceration experiences and their level of oppression or privilege.

By incorporating the experiences of the oppressed into criminal justice research it can provide an alternative narrative for the social problem of recidivism and new ways to

address this complex issue (Wesely & Miller, 2018). When using an intersectionality framework in research, Windsong (2018) highlighted the need to sample a diverse population of the oppressed populations to gain an accurate perception of their experiences. However, there can be some difficulties for oppressed people to be able to differentiate which identity or collection of identities impacts discrimination in certain situations (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). Additionally, this theory is deficient in that it does not look at how the individuals are shaped by environmental systems, which is where the addition of systems theory comes in.

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological system theory was developed by Bronfenbrenner as a lens to view how an individual is impacted by the different factors in the environment throughout their lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This theory divides the environment into four different components; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977); with the later addition of a fifth component, the chronosystem (Neal & Neal, 2013). The microsystem is the system closest to the individual, with the highest level of influence due to direct contact (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This system includes family, friends, schools, coworkers, and any other systems that an individual comes into direct contact with on a regular basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The mesosystem contains the interactions between entities in the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The exosystem consists of systems that have indirect or minimal contact with an individual, yet they still have influence over factors of that person's life, such as neighbors, community support agencies, politicians, and media outlets (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Macrosystems refer to

the larger societal culture and how that influences the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Often, there are major historical events or system trends that impact an individual, known as chronosystems (Neal & Neal, 2013). When there is dysfunction present in these social systems it creates higher levels of distress in the individual, placing them at higher risk for offending (Patten, La Rue, Caudill, Thomas, & Messer, 2018).

Systems theory applies to recidivism in many ways and on all different levels. Individuals are influenced by the systems that have the most direct contact with them, such as family and friends. Those individual's viewpoints on criminal behavior and/or gang membership can lay an early foundation of views regarding these subjects (Goldman et al., 2014). The interaction between those whom the individual holds in esteem regarding these topics also influences how the individual can interpret this behavior (Burns et al., 2015). Additionally, depending on where a family lives there may be increased opportunities at school and home to interact with gang members or engage in criminal behavior (Breetzke & Polaschek, 2018; Parent et al., 2016). Neighborhoods may foster a gang culture and have proximity to crime. Additionally, Burns et al. (2015) stated that an individual may be influenced by a greater ethnic culture, views presented by the media, and local politics (such as a local city politics regarding drug use). On an even larger scale, issues such as political policies regarding legality of substances, sentencing/bail reform, immigration, and crimes can impact individuals directly and indirectly. All of these different levels of social systems impact an individual's trajectory regarding offending and gang membership.

A study conducted by Patten et al. (2018) utilized systems theory to view how home visits can influence the environmental structures in which a reentry individual directly interacts (such as immediate family and other community agencies). The researchers found that overall the visits were perceived as helpful and they helped to foster a relationship of mutual respect between the correctional officer and reentry individual (Patten et al., 2018). Conducting home visits can assist correctional officers to help guide the reentry individual toward developing supportive environmental relationships in situations where they are often lacking that much needed support (Patten et al., 2018). By placing the intervention in the environment of the reentry individual it helps to incorporate and involve available resources, as well as assist the individual in addressing barriers to accessing these resources (Patten et al., 2018). The researchers asserted that the importance of systems on the influence of the reentry individual as an imperative viewpoint, and this study is the first to incorporate their voices in exploring their experience with home visits. The participants reported that home visits helped to detour risky behavior while the presence of law enforcement was also reported to slightly reduce crime in the neighborhood (Patten et al., 2018). It was also found that these positive interactions with law enforcement helped to change the participant's views toward a more positive viewpoint despite years of negative schemas (Patten et al., 2018).

While systems theory is a great way to organize and view the impact of external factors on recidivism in gang affiliated reentry individuals the theory is not perfect. One deficit of systems theory is that it does not explore how different people may be impacted differently by environmental systems based upon their unique identities. It assumes that

individuals are impacted by the systems in the same manner and to the same extent. This however is not always the case. Therefore, to best view the multifaceted issue of recidivism amongst gang affiliated reentry it is necessary to combine the theories of intersectionality and systems theory to gain a full perspective of individual and environmental factors related to this social problem. The combination of intersectionality and systems theory creates a lens in which to view how a person's identity impacts their experience with social systems while also exploring how social systems influence the individual. By applying this multifaceted lens to recidivism, we can explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals have with utilizing reentry services.

Application of Intersectionality and Systems Theory

Recidivism is a dynamic issue, with risk and protective factors interacting in different ways for every individual. A person's identity can have a major impact on how they are treated by society's systems. Research has found risk for recidivism to be an interaction between individual risk factors and environmental influences (Parent et al., 2016; Ward & Fortune, 2016). Systems theory states that a person is influenced by the systems and the way they interact with the person, while intersectionality views the impact that a person's identity has on the way these systems interact.

McNeeley (2018) found that that ecological risk factors impacted minority offenders but not white offenders, suggesting that the environmental risk factors influence individuals based upon their identity. Both facets play a major role in recidivism among gang affiliated reentry population, which is why it does this population a disservice to view the problem through a single lens. Research identifies that there are

many different social system factors that interact with the reentry population that play a role in the reintegration of the offender into society (Berg & Cobbina, 2017; Gunnison et al., 2015; Martin, 2016; Parent et al., 2016; Tarpey & Friend, 2016). For example, young African American males have a type of disadvantage in which they experience cumulative levels of oppression and the after effects of this discrimination (Drake, 2018; Owusu-Bempah, 2017). The justice system often reflects implicit or explicit bias that can prevent marginalized populations from gaining power (Martin, 2016; Owusu-Bempah, 2017). African Americans are more likely to be stopped and searched by law enforcement, especially those living in impoverished neighborhoods (Owusu-Bempah, 2017) therefore they are at a higher risk for recidivism based upon sheer chance of increased interaction with law enforcement. Not only are we looking at an issue of how social systems influence individuals' lives (Owusu-Bempah, 2017), but also how their identity impacts and shapes these interactions (Moradi, 2017).

Marginalized reentry populations also have such a unique set of interactive needs that it can create a conundrum, with one system dependent on access to the other, which is not always possible (Baglivio et al., 2017; Berg & Cobbina, 2017; DeHart et al.; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017). It can be difficult to get employment without stable housing, but stable housing is very difficult to obtain without a history of employment and often alternative sources of income such as benefits are not counted (Grossi, 2017). A study conducted by Ray, Grommon, Buchanan, Brown, and Watson (2017) found significant reduction in recidivism risk for participants whose treatment agencies had multiple types of service providers working together collectively compared to agencies that just focused

on one type of service. A multidisciplinary approach was found to increase access to resources and focus on an overall holistic approach to reentry and recovery (Ray et al., 2017).

Lockwood et al. (2017) stated that preexisting oppressions, such as differences among races on their pre incarceration education levels and socioeconomic status, play a major role in impacting recidivism rates. While they found that employment was a huge impactor of recidivism regardless of race, when factoring in racial disparities among education and impacts of socioeconomic status it was apparent that young African American males had higher risks of recidivism (Lockwood et al., 2017). Additionally, the historical social construct of viewing the young African American male as a “criminal” influences how these individuals continue to be treated once they reenter into society (Owusu-Bempah, 2017). Therefore, it can be concluded that the intersection of identities is a major predictor of risk of recidivism. Martin (2016) is in support of this, suggesting the need to explore offender’s intersectionality as an explanation for whether an individual reoffends, taking culture into rehabilitation services.

There has been a rise in female incarcerations, however rehabilitation services have not adjusted to meet the differential needs of the female offender (Kerig, 2018; Vigesaa et al. 2016). Females involved in the justice system tend to have higher rates of abuse, abuse that is often occurring on multiple levels, therefore, interventions need to be gender specific to meet the needs of this population (Kerig, 2018; Vigesaa et al., 2016). Additionally, females were more likely to become caretakers of their children upon reentry, resulting in the need for higher levels of housing and financial assistance

(Vigesaa et al., 2016). Morash, Kashy, Bohmert, Cobbina, and Smith (2017) found that women who were unable to receive housing and financial assistance showed a significantly higher risk for recidivism than women who had access to these services. For single mothers, returning to work in low paying jobs resulted in more financial hardship than women who were on government assistance (Morash et al., 2017).

Kerig (2018) stated that interventions historically have been developed and tested/normed on male populations of offenders, as they were the majority of the correctional system, but now that females are increasing there needs to be a focus on their rehabilitation needs. While there is some overlap in needs such as education, housing, and employment there are also unique needs for female treatment that need further exploration, and that treatment for underlying abuse should begin while females are incarcerated (Vigesaa et al., 2016). Morash et al. (2017) supported this statement by stating that research has primarily focused on the male offender. Kerig found that when females recidivate, it is most often due to a technical violation such as not meeting a supervision requirement, rather than picking up new charges. Female offenders who enter different rehabilitation services often have different characteristics and reentry needs (Vigesaa et al., 2016). Females of minority descent are not only disproportionately represented in the justice system but have the highest recidivism rates (Kerig, 2018). This indicated a need to focus on the differential experiences of individuals based upon their intersection of identities and social position of power and oppression to understand experiences with rehabilitation services and administer the most effective services for the individual. Additionally, it was proposed by Peterson and Panfil (2017) that exploring

why females join gangs needs a multilevel approach, looking at macro, meso, and microsystem level influences as well as the intersection of identities, to explore how they interact to shape an individual's life trajectory to best understand the complex process of gang involvement.

Rehabilitation requires individuals to make major changes, often including changing lifestyle patterns that have been used to survive for many years or follow a generational pattern (Grossi, 2017). The current social system that is in control of how rehabilitation services are administered has limited knowledge of the oppressed groups collective experiences, as they come from intersections of power (Harris, 2017). It has been found that there are structural inequalities in the justice system that impact the racial inequalities regarding recidivism such as differential sentencing for types of drugs and increased cost of alternative sentencing programs that not all offenders can afford (Owusu-Bempah, 2017). Datachi, Barretti, and Thompson (2016) described recidivism as a multisystemic problem in which many different systems interact to impact an individual, combined with the interaction of individual factors, and that the combination of all the above factors create the unique individuals of recidivism for the individual. By addressing the multifaceted variables of recidivism, we can begin to address this major social problem.

To understand motivations and move past their criminal behavior, an individual must reestablish a new identity, and often this identity relies on certain cultural scripts (Hlavka et al., 2015). For example, individuals who were successfully able to be rehabilitated were found to have let go of the felon label attached by society and replaced

it with a more prosocial identity (Hlavka et al., 2015). The researchers found that while physical needs were essential to rehabilitation, it was the shift in cognitive process, emotional needs, and healthy connections that assisted in successful reentry. However, it may not be as easy as it sounds when society has created the label and then continues to treat people a certain way based upon this label, creating oppression (Harris, 2017). By utilizing the lens of intersectionality, we explore how this label interacts with other labels to create an individual's social position, then apply systems theory to view how the systems in the position impact the individual. So an individual who has multiple intersects of oppression is more likely to not only more likely to be placed in a social system with less opportunities (Lockwood et al., 2017), such as subpar school systems and high levels of crime in their neighborhood, additionally, they will be treated by systems in a manner that supports systematic oppression (Harris, 2017), such as the criminal justice system.

Hlavaka et al. (2015) found common themes of stigma and shame among individuals who were able to successfully reenter into society, especially in the job and housing fields. Other aspects of shame or embarrassment resulted from punitive probation or parole requirements, such as having to have potential employer or doctors sign off for time spent to verify whereabouts. Another major theme was being labeled a felon, and the impact that had on interactions with social systems and domains of life. Connecting with a faith-based organization was also found to counteract individual views of identity, focusing on a more positive aspect of ones' identity by identifying as a child of God, as well as assisting to help the individual obtain a sense of forgiveness for past

actions, improving feelings of self-worth (Hlavka et al., 2015). Experiences of social connections found themes of inadequacy regarding inability to support children (physically be there and financial support) and inconsistent contact with family members, with family bond being a strong motivator to rehabilitate. Additionally, family provided a sense of identity, such as parent or partner, that could help to steer individuals away from the identity of “criminal” by providing an alternative role for the individual to focus on (Hlavka et al., 2015).

Individuals who were able to successfully reenter into society often reconstructed their identity, reframing their time in the correctional experience as a learning experience and some even used it in a manner to assist others who were involved in the justice system (Hlavka et al., 2015), this helped to foster hope among the individuals as well as reframe the offender identity to the rehabilitated offender. The researchers found that often these experiences interconnected, and that the combination of themes interacting were the result of positive rehabilitation. In conclusion, intersectionality guides research to explore the experiences of the marginalized populations and incorporate their experiences of oppression based upon their identities into research, while systems theory explores how the environment influences these individuals in a larger context. Therefore, while intersectionality explores the persons’ identity and how that impacts the way they make meaning of their surroundings, incorporating systems theory into this context also explores the impact that the current social systems has on these groups at a deeper level than intersectionality alone.

Literature Review

Risk Factors for Recidivism

There are many risk factors for recidivism, both personal and environmental, that can be present at different stages of life. There is a significant overlap regarding risk factors for first time offending as well as reoffending. It is important to have a thorough understanding of each different type of risk factor as well as how the risk factors interact to impact recidivism.

Childhood risk factors. To understand risk factors, it is important to start with childhood risk factors. While some of these risk factors, such as having a family member incarcerated or having a single parent, female head of household (Baglivio et al., 2015), increase a youth's risk of becoming an offender, there is significant research that childhood offenders have the highest recidivism rates into adulthood (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). Therefore, it is important to highlight these risk factors as they are at the beginning of the cycle of recidivism. There are other childhood risk factors, such as having a low socioeconomic status and having family members who are incarcerated (Baglivio et al., 2015), that play a strong role in risk of first time offending and recidivism. Having an incarcerated family member places high levels of stress on the family such as emotional, financial, and physical, with needs such as childcare, stress of visitation, loss of family income, and having to utilize financial resources to support the incarcerated individual (Datachi et al., 2016). Additionally, stigma can become a barrier to families seeking support resulting in isolation for the family members (Datachi et al., 2016).

Exposure to a vast array of childhood traumas is often linked to risk of offending. These types of abuse (emotional, physical, verbal, and sexual), neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse and/or mental illness in the home, single parent households, divorce, and parental incarceration have all been linked to higher risks of becoming a first-time offender as well as high rates of recidivism (Craig, Baglivio, Wolff, Piquero, & Epps, 2017). Often these childhood traumas go unaddressed and the impairment continues into adulthood.

Family risk factors. Family relationships can also be a risk factor if they are a negative influence (Baglivio et al., 2017). According to Lee et al. (2016) the family can play a major role in shaping and motivating a person's behavior. Family in this context can refer to family of origin as well as spouses and children. If a person's support system does not have the structural support to assist the individual in change it can negatively impact attempts at rehabilitation. Additionally, it has been found by that if families have dysfunction, engage in criminal behaviors, or substance use it creates a higher risk for recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2017).

Individual risk factors. Antisocial attitudes have been found to be a significant predictor of recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2017; Datachi et al., 2016). Additionally, Baglivio and Jackowski (2015) reported that difficulty in managing emotions, struggles with communication, and poor interpersonal skills are all risk factors for recidivism, along with struggles in problem solving and other life skills. Walters and Cohen (2016) found that criminal thought process predicted recidivism risk equally across race, gender,

age, and criminal history. Therefore, regardless of all other risk factors criminal thought process plays a major role in risk of offending

Substance use disorders, mental health, and physical health issues all are major risk factors for recidivism (Houser et al., 2018). Approximately 70% of individuals who are incarcerated have a behavioral health struggles (Amani et al., 2018). Additionally, it was found that females are more likely than males to have mental health struggles, have experienced trauma, and abuse substances to cope with the above issues (Bomert & Demeris, 2018). Research has found that alcohol and drug use can reduce inhibitions and result in poor decision making, a mindset that can lead to criminal behavior (Houser et al., 2018). Often these issues go untreated for many reasons such as lack of service providers, difficulty in accessing services due to structural barriers in the community, the individual being unready for change, and stigma/cultural beliefs about treatment (Amani et al., 2018). While incarcerated there are very few treatment options, even if there is a program available they are often very impacted or provide subpar care (Bender et al., 2016). Mental illness, substance abuse, and physical health struggles can also impair engagement in necessary rehabilitation services (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018). For example, symptoms can impact ability to attend appointments, whether it is due to physical pain or not being coherent enough to comprehend ones' surroundings. Missing mandatory appointments due to symptoms can place an individual at risk for a technical violation or decompensation and decreased motivation toward positive change (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018), showing both a direct and indirect effect on recidivism.

One of the highest predictors of recidivism is prior involvement in the justice system (Chambers & Wallace, 2016). While this does not provide much insight given the definition of recidivism, it does highlight the huge issue faced by the reentry population. Research has found that minority youth are overrepresented in the justice system; for every five African American youth two are involved with the justice system (Amani et al., 2018). Given that prior incarceration is one of the biggest predictors of recidivism this cycle of recidivism starts at an early age and is a major problem for minority groups and their children. According to Amani et al. (2018) involvement with the justice system is linked to poor academic performance, high unemployment rates, increase exposure to violence, and foster connections with other deviant individuals. Houser et al. (2018) and Howard (2016) identified other personal risk factors include age (the younger the higher chance of rearrests), gender (males are at higher risk for recidivism), and race (minorities have a significantly higher change of recidivism). While males have higher rates of recidivism, there are also very different needs for female offenders, who often have different rehabilitation needs due to differences in skills and circumstances, such as increased likelihood of being the caretaker of children (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018).

Environmental risk factors. There are many ways in which the environment can impact risk of recidivism. Unfortunately, many of the environmental risk factors overlap in the neighborhoods in which they occur. A major risk factor for recidivism is associating with deviant peers (Baglivio et al., 2017). Chambers and Wallace (2016) found that when reentry individuals returned to an area in which there were high rates of reentry had a 67 % risk of reoffending. This can be especially true for individuals who

are gang affiliated, who are more likely to interact with each other based on proximity, shared experience, and gang culture (Bender et al., 2016).

Neighborhoods that pose a high risk for recidivism also have high rates of poverty, crime and violence, and high rates of residential mobility (Baglivio et al., 2017; Gunnison et al., 2015; McNeeley, 2018). Houser et al. (2018) stated that reentry individuals were at a higher risk of testing dirty in neighborhoods with large amounts of liquor stores, bars, and drug dealings. According to Baglivio et al. (2017), neighborhoods that are racially heterogeneous also pose a high risk for criminal behavior and recidivism. This may be due to an increased difficulty in integration and making positive connections when there are significant levels of ethnic diversity or possibly due to tension between races (Breetzke & Polaschek, 2018).

Other environmental risk factors include limited access to work or educational facilities (Bender et al., 2016; Lockwood et al., 2017), or even in urban areas these resources can be impacted by limited resources and the sheer number of people in need of those resources (Ojha et al., 2018). However, in more rural areas there are often lack of resources and barriers to these resources such as lack of public transportation, communities with stigmatic views about the reentry population, and high chances of recognition when accessing services (Ojha et al., 2018). According to Gunnison et al. (2015) lack of resources and community supports significantly impacts risk of recidivism.

Access to transportation can have a major impact on a person's ability to successfully complete reentry requirements. Lack of transportation can make it more difficult for a person to keep necessary appointments or maintain employment (Bohmert

& DeMaris, 2018). Barriers to transportation can include having to drive with a suspended license, lack of a reliable vehicle, living in an area without adequate public transportation, or being unable to walk to service locations (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018). Additionally, individuals may not feel comfortable walking or taking public transportation in unsafe neighborhoods. These barriers can create a ripple effect of negative outcomes such as more criminal charges or violations for missed appointments.

Unemployment is a major issue for the reentry population, as conventional ways to income can be a major crime reducer and income is access to so many different and other reentry needs such as housing, transportation, and meeting basic needs (Amani et al., 2018; Bender et al., 2016; Houser et al., 2018). Lack of employment can place stress and pressure on the reentry individual even with the best intentions toward rehabilitation and redirect them towards nonconventional sources of income (Amani et al., 2018).

There are many barriers to employment such as denial due to a background check, the impact of institutionalism on employability, poor education limiting opportunities, intrusion of law enforcement on employment resulting in less willingness to hire, and low self-efficacy or feelings of shame resulting in self limitations (Amani et al., 2018). There is also a connection between employment opportunities and level of education, with higher levels of education relating to increased pay as well as higher levels of wellbeing (Sharlein, 2016).

Houser et al. (2018) stated that lower education as well as a lack of vocational skills have been linked to higher rates of recidivism, with high school dropouts having the highest risk of recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2017). Sharlein (2016) found that decreased

level of education correlated with increased chance of offending and that involvement in the justice system also reduced academic achievement. Having lower academic achievement can place an individual on a trajectory that can lead to incarceration (Sharlein, 2016). When a reentry individual participates in educational services it reduces their risk of recidivism by 13% (Hawkins, 2017). It also increased their chances of employment by about 13% (Hawkins, 2017). Therefore, while unemployment and low academic achievement are risk for recidivism, they can also lead to individuals to have a deficit in other life areas, such as housing (Bender et al., 2016).

Lack of access to stable housing is a huge risk factor for recidivism (Houser et al., 2018). It can be difficult to obtain housing with a criminal record, without stable income, and having a criminal history can disqualify individuals from housing resources (Bender et al., 2016). Often the individuals who can provide temporary housing for a reentry individual are not the best matches for inspiring positive change as they may also engage in deviant behavior (Houser et al., 2018). Inability to have stable housing can result in struggles in meeting supervisory requirements, especially when having a place to live is a requirement, which places a higher risk for recidivism based upon violating (Bender et al., 2016). The above described risk factors often are interconnected, and a reentry individual often experiences several or all of the risk factors for recidivism, resulting in a higher overall risk (Ward & Fortune, 2016).

Protective Factors

When someone has a strong cognitive motivation for change coupled with a lack of a criminal identity, it can serve to protect against environmental risk factors (Berg &

Covina, 2017). The strength of the individual's commitment to change had a strong impact on deterring reoffending even in an environment with social influences to engage in deviant behavior (Berg & Cobbina, 2017). Additionally, having a strong sense of ethnic identity can serve as a protective factor against a multitude of factors including criminal behavior, as it can serve as a way to reauthor ones' sense of identity away from a criminal identity, and serve as a way to help one cognitively counter racial inequalities in society (Upadhyayula, 2017). Having strong family ties, including positive influence from family of origin, can be a major protective factor against recidivism (Houser et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016). Additionally, Houser et al. (2018) reported that having a significant other and/or children can serve as a strong motivator for change. Family can not only assist in being a strong motivator for positive change but can set an example of socially acceptable behaviors and assist in removing barriers by assisting with access and utilization of reentry services (Lee et al., 2016). Family can assist in motivation to not hurt the family by reoffending, provide job and other resource leads, increase the amount of time spent engaging in prosocial behaviors, and reinforce prosocial values (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018; Lee et al., 2016). Additionally, families can provide assistance with resources such as housing, transportation, employment resources, childcare, food, and other basic needs (Datachi et al., 2016).

When an individual is returning into a wealthy community it reduces the risk of recidivism; even in disadvantaged neighborhoods, if they are located next to affluent neighborhoods it can serve as a protective factor (Baglivio et al., 2017). Faith-based organizations can help to reduce recidivism on several levels, through providing

resources, a prosocial support system, and can help to support a positive identity that does not solely focus on being an ex-offender (Houser et al., 2018). Prosocial social connections can play such a crucial role in reducing recidivism, that even visits from chaplains and mentors, with no prior connection to the inmate, can help to reduce recidivism through establishing a positive self-identity and non criminal social network (Duwe & Johnson, 2016). Protective factors are important to consider in reentry literature, as they can play on individual and community strengths to help reduce recidivism.

Interaction of Dynamic Needs

The above described risk factors do not operate individually for the gang affiliated reentry individual. Research conducted by Parent et al. (2016) found that while factors such as antisocial personality traits, association with deviant peers, and nonconventional lifestyle choices all impacted recidivism, it was best to explore these not in a summative manner but in an interactive approach. There is a significant amount of co-occurring risk factors (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). For example, while it has been found that having a criminal record can impact ability to obtain employment, when you factor in other identities such as race and gender it becomes significantly more difficult for an African American male with a felony to obtain employment than males of other races (Bender et al., 2016). Gunnison et al. (2015) reported that for successful reentry an individual needs employment, housing, access to education, family supports, access to substance use services and prosocial activity opportunities. Lack of transportation can impact access to many of the needed services described above (Bohmert & DeMaris, 2018). Additionally,

employment alone is not sufficient enough to deter crime, as often the jobs available to the gang affiliated reentry population may not have a high enough pay rate to deter from engagement in nonconventional means of gaining employment (Cook, Kang, Braga, Ludwig, & O'Brien, 2015). This is partially due to lack of skill set or educational background as well as physical or mental illness impacting employability (Cook et al., 2015), which helps to display how the interaction of these factors impacts recidivism.

Ward and Fortune (2016) found that while the interaction of dynamic risk factors significantly impacts an individual's risk for recidivism, they are not causal factors for reoffending, which is something that is important to note when looking at rehabilitation services. They also specified that while there are predictive factors, there is no explanation for how some individuals who possess all the risk factors do not offend, even when similar protective factors are in place (Ward & Fortune, 2016). The researchers propose that this is in part due to the interaction effects of the risk factors, that they interact differently within individuals based upon circumstances (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). Additionally, some of the risk factors are socially constructed, therefore, they may not hold true across differential context (Ward & Fortune, 2016).

Gang affiliated Reentry Population

Gang affiliated reentry individuals are considered high risk. They experience a two-tiered type of discrimination, in that they must deal with the stigma of being an "ex-convict" as well as being a "gang member" (Bender et al., 2016; Goldman et al., 2014), making it exceptionally difficult to obtain housing and employment. There may be limitations placed on where an individual can reside based upon their gang affiliation,

both by reentry service providers and by the boundaries that developed by different gang territories (Goldman et al., 2014). A housing project may be in rival gang territory making it an unsafe option for a gang affiliated individual, resulting in this resource being inaccessible (Grossi, 2017). Even if some individuals attempt to leave a gang they may appear to be gang affiliated to police, other gang members (both same and rival gangs), and the overall community (Dooley et al., 2014; Goldman et al., 2014; Grossi, 2017). Law enforcement agencies tend to place higher levels of scrutiny on gang affiliated individuals, resulting in higher involvement with the legal system even when non-gang members may be engaging in similar amounts of deviant behavior it is more likely to go unattended (Dooley et al., 2014).

Additionally, the underlying reasons for joining a gang often go unaddressed in this population, creating a rehabilitation barrier. There are many reasons that people join a gang, such as to avoid family problems, a sense of identity and belonging, access to desirable things (money, drugs, sexual partners), and cultural or familial pressures (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). Less is known about the reason that people leave, some of the reasons identified by Chalas and Grekul (2017) include age, maturity levels, life changing events (such as marriage or having kids), and too much exposure to violence. Most gang members became gang affiliated early in age and the main reasons identified were for respect, money, or if joining a gang in prison, for safety and benefits (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). It was also found that the majority of gang members either left the gang or wanted to leave the gang as they continued to age (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). Programs such as education/vocational training, substance use treatment were identified as strengthening a

person's ability to leave a gang while family influence was identified as a reason to stay in the gang (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). According to Dooley et al. (2014), approximately 5% of gang members successfully drop out of a gang.

While the majority of current research on gangs focuses on the male offender, females can also be active gang members, engaging in similar types of crimes and experiencing the aftereffects of criminal behavior (Morash et al., 2017; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). There have been conflicting views regarding gender differences in gang involvement, with some researchers finding no significant gender difference between early childhood risk factors while others found there were significant differences on risk for gang involvement across genders (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). The motivating factors have also been found by some research to also be similar across gender, but with different sources of environmental influence (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). It was suggested that these finding of similarity were due to influence by current research that is normed on males as well as utilizing testing measures that support this male dominated worldview (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). Additionally, female gang membership is viewed by society as different than male, with two common categories of the "butch" or "tomboy" gang member and the sexualized gang member, however these misconceptions do not reflect the accuracy of gang involvement, which can shape how individuals are treated when they don't fulfill those social norms (Peterson & Panfil, 2017).

Gang membership culture emphasizes group loyalty and hypermasculinity as well as encourages criminal behavior and substance use (Bender et al., 2016). Upadhyayula et al. (2017) found that having a strong sense of ethnic pride facilitated safety in gang

membership. It is predicted that this is because gangs support a collective identity that can incorporate ethnic identity. This indicates that gang membership may serve to provide a sense of unity and identity, and that this identity interacts with other identities to form an individual's sense of self.

Additionally, it was proposed by Bergen-Cico, Haygood-El, Jennings-Bey, and Lane (2014) that gang membership is a type of addiction, in which people become addicted to the lifestyle aspects such as thrill-seeking instant gratification, drugs, access to sexual partners, and ease of access to money. This behavioral addiction is similar to other addictions in regard to the loss of control, neurological responses to the behaviors, and increased frequency and severity of behaviors (Bergen-Cico et al., 2014). These factors are important to consider as this mentality can impact attempts at rehabilitations. Chalas and Grekul (2017) also stated that interventions such as working on changing the cognitive process of gang involved individuals and increased engagement in prosocial activities can assist in an increased likelihood that an individual will want to remove themselves from the gang lifestyle.

Gang membership has been found to increase recidivism by six percent (Dooley et al., 2014). Additionally, gang membership has the strongest influence on reoffending early in the reentry process (Caudill, 2010), a timeframe that has been found to be the most crucial for rehabilitation services and when overall risk of recidivism is high (Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Valera, Brotzman, Wilson, & Reid, 2017). This increased risk may be due to correlating factors between gang membership and criminal behavior. Dooley et al. (2014) reported that gang members have increased opportunity to commit

crimes based upon associations and criminal networking. The authors also stated that the risk factors for recidivism (such as age, masculinity, lower education, less family connections, increased substance use, and lengthier criminal history) tend to be more present in gang affiliated individuals, placing this population in a higher risk for recidivism.

Additionally, gangs are more likely to foster and reinforce criminal thinking patterns, the type of cognitive process that was found by Walters and Cohen (2016) to increase risk of reoffending. When a person is surrounded by other individuals who share a similar thought process and value system it can reinforce these types of distorted cognitive processes (Walter & Cohen, 2016). Peterson and Panfil (2017) stated that being a gang member becomes an aspect of one's identity but that this is not the only aspect of their identity that they hold on to, bringing to light the importance of understanding when this type of identity is brought out in the individual and when it best serves them. Peter and Panfil found that gang involvement can actually improve self-esteem as it can create a sense of self for individuals who may not have otherwise developed this type of identity due to lack of other group identity options being present. Studies have shown mixed results regarding the impact of interventions between gang affiliated and non-gang members (Dooley et al., 2014; Weinrath et al., 2016). Prison gang membership may result in prison serving as a reinforcer for deviant behavior (Dooley et al., 2014) and there is a high crossover between prison and street gang involvement. Connection to a criminal community can strengthen criminal cognitive patterns (such as lack of responsibility and sense of entitlement), a thought process that has been shown to

increase recidivism rates (Folk et al., 2016). This is a factor that must be accounted for when looking at recidivism among gang affiliated reentry individuals. Gang affiliated individuals are, by definition, linked to a criminal community, which enhances their risk for recidivism.

Not only are gang affiliated individuals more likely to recidivate, but they tend to do so quicker than non-gang affiliated individuals and commit more severe crimes (Spooner et al., 2017). Additionally, gang affiliated individuals deal with barriers to rehabilitation such as stigma, unstable living situations, impacts of trauma from violence. There are minimal specialized treatment options available, as most reentry services do not specialize in gang affiliated reentry and do not address the additional risk factors and high level of needs for this population (Spooner et al., 2017). The researchers evaluated a program called Gang Intervention Treatment Reentry Development for Youth (GitRedy) to determine its effectiveness in recidivism among gang affiliated reentry youth. This program combined family therapy services with gang focused intervention (Spooner et al., 2017). While the results indicated that there was no long-term difference between the program participants and civilian participants, it did find that these participants' recidivism rates were lower than gang affiliated individuals who did not participate in the program (Spooner et al., 2017).

When viewing gang membership through a lens of intersectionality and systems theory, it becomes an alternative lifestyle, to counteract to oppressive narrative developed by the dominant culture (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). Gang membership is also influenced by the exosystem such as the neighborhood in which some individuals live, school

system, and family dynamics (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). Females who live in high violence neighborhoods may be pushed to join a gang for safety reasons, such as to avoid unwanted physical and sexual advances, while individuals may attempt to use a gang to feel a sense of belonging and connection, a type of pseudo family to meet unmet needs from the family of origin (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). School systems can react on biases and create self-fulfilling prophecies, expecting young ethnic females to be incapable and at-risk youth, therefore they pay less attention to their academic needs and have their beliefs reinforced when these individuals do not perform as high as other groups (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). The peer groups that an individual can also guide youth toward or away from gang membership, with males seeing gangs as more of a means toward material things and females viewing gangs as a connecting bond (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). The researchers stated that females are more likely to join a gang in response to social rejection or repeated bullying. While research often views gangs as a product of dysfunction, individuals who join gangs often have limited options due to the intersect of their marginalized identities, therefore, viewing gangs as an adaptive mechanism can be helpful (Peterson & Panfil, 2017). This is why utilizing the lens of intersectionality is important as well as systems theory.

Connecting the Pieces of the Reentry Puzzle

To reduce recidivism, it is critical to have a thorough understanding of the dynamic needs of gang affiliated reentry population. There is a large amount of intersectionality among the reentry population such as the stigma of being labeled a criminal, race, poverty, behavioral health struggles, and physical health issues. This

impacts their ability to access services and the environmental needs of this population. For example, there is a need for both employment and stable housing when someone is released, and the needs are not mutually exclusive, as they impact the ability to access the other need (Bender et al., 2016; Grossi, 2017; Gunnison et al., 2015). These individuals often also have struggles with mental and physical health, addiction, lack of basic life skills, and poor social/familial supports in place (Gunnison et al., 2015; Tarpey & Friend, 2016). These groups also disproportionately experience the secondary effects of incarceration such as disqualification for financial aid, housing assistance, inability to regain custody of their children and lack of access to other benefits (Tyler & Brockermann, 2017). They can also be disqualified from public benefits, which increases risk of recidivism for economic means as they lack access to conventional means to income (Morash et al., 2017). These factors all come with their own unique set of stigmas and interact with each other in ways that not only impact the other aspects of identify but influences the way in which the individual interactions with the environment in a reciprocal manner (Tyler & Brockmann, 2017).

It was also found through structural equational modeling that while the individual risk factors impacted the risk for offending, it was the interaction of these factors that played a greater influence on predicating criminal behavior (Wolff & Baglivio, 2015). Datchi et al. (2016) stated that interventions need to take an eclectic approach, focuses on individual risk factors as well as addressing environmental risk factors for recidivism. Datchi et al. stated that interventions to reduce recidivism are not a one size fits all, that they need to match the individual's strengths, needs, motivation, and learning style to be

effective. Polaschek and Yesberg (2018) conducted a study comparing two groups of individuals, one who received intensive treatment while incarcerated and one who received no services, following the first year of their reentry. The researchers found that while the treatment group reentered into society with much higher protective factors, the group deviated toward the non-treatment group of the course of reentry, with the 1 year results indicating no significant difference in protective factors (Polaschek & Yesberg, 2018). This highlights the importance of viewing the combination of individual and environmental factors in rehabilitative services.

It is essential to understand the needs of the gang affiliated reentry population to guide interventions and best practice. Amani et al. (2018) found that the justice system disempowers families and that incorporating the family into rehabilitation increases the chances of success. Themes identified by Tarpey and Friend (2016) for a successful reentry included, “a place to call home, the decision to change, self-fulfillment and a suitable support system” (p. 285). Reentry programs can assist previously incarcerated individuals in meeting their dynamic needs in areas such as education, vocational, housing, financial, family reunification, substance use, and physical/mental health issues (Zortman et al., 2016). According to Weinrath et al. (2016) supervised probation is not an effective way to reduce criminal behavior. They utilized both a qualitative and quantitative methodology to assess the effectiveness of a program, Spotlight, that utilized mentorship to deter at risk youth from engaging in criminal behavior. The researchers found that the participants in the Spotlight program has significantly less recidivism than the comparison group of probationers (Weinrath et al., 2016). This is consistent with

research on recidivism in general, which suggests that supervision without treatment is ineffective (DeVall et al., 2017; Drake, 2018).

Rehabilitation services have been shown to increase the length of time before reoffending as well as decreased number of arrests, however, there has been inconsistent findings across different reentry service providers (Visher, Lattimore, Barrick, & Tueller, 2017). This may be due to the different types of services provided by reentry providers, as there is a lack of consistency amongst these types of providers (Visher et al., 2017). To be most effective treatment should begin while incarcerated and then be followed up with reentry services based upon the needs of the individual (Visher et al., 2017). Indeed, it has been found that treatment options are limited while incarcerated, and that correctional facilities can increase criminal behavior and networks (Tyler & Brockmann, 2016; Visher et al., 2017). While there have been mixed results regarding the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, many of these studies only evaluate one program and do not include the impact that different services provide when reentry services are a combined effort (Visher et al., 2017). Overall the trend has shown that when rehabilitation services utilize best practices they can help to reduce recidivism risk, focusing on individual treatment combined with material needs (Visher et al., 2017).

Research has shown that alternative types of sentencing, when treatment is a component, can be more effective than incarceration. These types of programs can simultaneously punish and rehabilitate, while reducing connections with other deviant individuals, that can be made while incarcerated (Bouchard & Wong, 2018; Datachi et al., 2016; Drake, 2018; Visher et al., 2017). Henneguella, Monnery, and Kensey (2016)

found that when rehabilitation and punishment were combined, recidivism rates not only reduced about 6% over a 5 year timespan, but it was less costly on society than incarceration, amongst a group of electronically monitored participants. On this note, if supervision is conducted without treatment Drake (2018) found it to be a burden of cost without positive outcome. Additionally, supervision combined with treatment has been found to be a cost-effective way in reducing recidivism, with a trend toward intensive supervision over incarceration (Drake, 2018). There have been several states that have implemented types of alternative sentencing programs with high levels of supervision, psychosocial interventions, and administering consequences for noncompliance, with overall findings that alternative sentencing when combined with treatment is the most effective at reducing recidivism (DeVall et al., 2017). Datachi et al. (2016) discussed that incarceration is a family matter and that interventions should focus on strengthening family bonds while a person is incarcerated. However, often individuals are relocated to facilities that are located far away from family and visitation restrictions can limit opportunities (Berg & Cobbina, 2017). Additionally, very few facilities provide family treatment (Datachi et al., 2016). By incorporating family treatment into rehabilitation interventions, it can help to reduce recidivism by strengthening family bonds that tend to be weakened by incarceration as well as some of the factors that can lead up to incarceration; as the family can provide the support needed to encourage prosocial behaviors (Datachi et al., 2016). Datachi et al. conducted a program evaluation which involved individual and family treatment while incarcerated, addressing addiction, communication, parenting skills, and criminal thought processes, found that recidivism

rates for participants were significantly less than nonparticipants in the same area. While the majority of research involving family involvement in treatment focuses on youth, there has been a recent trend of incorporating family into adult rehabilitation and it has been found to be similarly effective with adults (Datachi et al., 2016). This suggests that interventions that focus on family reunification as well as address other areas of impairment, such as multisystemic therapy and functional family therapy play a role in successful rehabilitation (Datachi et al., 2016).

Bouchard and Wong (2018) reported that home confinement programs can assist offenders in maintaining prosocial bonds, contributing to society through means of employment, increase feelings of self-efficacy, and assist in a smoother reentry process. It is also a cheaper means of dealing with offenders for society, however it is a costlier alternative for the offenders (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). This can create a barrier resulting in only those privileged enough to afford this service being able to utilize it, essentially those of higher socioeconomic status. Bouchard and Wong found that when home confinement was used as a true alternative to incarceration (not as a post release monitoring), it significantly reduced recidivism rates. This also brings up the issue regarding individuals who don't have stable housing options. Breetzke and Polaschek (2018) reported that reentry individuals without stable housing were at a higher risk for recidivism, however it may also disqualify them from alternative types of sentencing or result in a violation due to circumstances that they have minimal control over. Another factor found by Breetzke and Polaschek was that increased number of probation/parole requirements resulted in higher rates of recidivism. It was suggested that this may be due

to the access barriers to needed services such as lack of availability, unstable transportation, or unreasonable and unreasonable requirements.

Pre arrest diversion programs are another alternative form of sentencing that can help to reduce recidivism. Upon successful completion of the program an individual has the option to be rehabilitated without having to deal with the long-term stigmatic effect of having a criminal record (Kopak & Frost, 2017). However, the researchers found that individuals with risk factors such as mental health issues, substance abuse, and violent crimes were less likely to successfully complete the program. Additionally, individuals who were chronic offenders were not found eligible for this type of program, with most program participants first time, misdemeanor offenders (Kopak & Frost, 2017). While this is an asset for individuals in the correctional system and can help to reduce overall recidivism rates, it is also a prime example of how privilege can impact recidivism. Offenders who are deemed lower risk are more likely to have higher educations, more family supports, and be of more privileged intersecting identities such as White and male (Kopak & Frost, 2017). In fact, approximately 60% of program participants were white (Kopak & Frost, 2017), which does not reflect the trends of majority of minority involvement in the justice system, indicating racial disparities.

Restorative justice is a process of involving community members in the justice process with the goal that it will shape the system and the way that it impacts the people effected by criminal behavior (Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Rossner and Bruce (2016) found that restorative justice meetings strengthened the feeling of a community of connection that can deter from criminal behavior, so long as the community representatives appeared

to be equally disbursed on both sides and supportive of the process. Additionally, this method is supported by Willison and O'Brien (2016) to meet the reentry need of women by incorporating alternative viewpoints, ones that may be more aligned with the marginalized group. It is essential to reduce the social structure of oppression that stems from the current correctional practices, one that a direction toward restorative justice may help address (Willison & O'Brien, 2016). There were times in the process where the community members hindered the process by unprofessional type actions (Rossner & Bruce, 2016). The involvement of the community members assists to provide the justice system with a realistic representation of what types of services are available and how to link the offender to the services (Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Overall, the use of restorative justice was found to assist in detouring individuals from reoffending. Additionally, involvement from community members in the form of visitation of inmates by mentors or clergy members has been found to reduce recidivism, other than technical violations (Duwe & Johnson, 2016).

In general, the above programs build a solid foundation for the impact of treatment as a part of alternative sentencing as the most effective way to reduce recidivism, with the next step in reducing recidivism being an understanding of the most effective interventions. Interventions are found to be most effective if they include multiple components such as education, vocational training, cognitive behavioral treatment, and substance use treatment (Duwe & Johnson, 2016). Additionally, the authors reported that when there is not comprehensive treatment it is ineffective in reducing recidivism. A study conducted by Folk et al. (2018) found that criminal thought

process impacted recidivism similarly across age, gender, ethnicity, and education. These findings suggest that a cognitive behavioral component of treatment is essential in reducing recidivism. This is due to not only the impact that the criminal thought process has on behaviors but to assist individuals in reconstructing their identity, an identity that, while incarcerated, focuses on the criminal aspect of identity (Hlavka et al., 2015).

Additionally, there is a focus on rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, this trend in research becomes even stronger when it comes to gang affiliated reentry offenders. Owusu-Bempah (2017) acknowledged that by not focusing on the intersection of identities the criminal justice field is falling short in understanding the complex issues related to this population, as this type of structural inequality impacts African Americans' view of self as well as risk of offending. Since alternative sentencing programs are still relatively new, there is an inherent gap in the research regarding program evaluations, and minimal research that looks at the effectiveness of the programs amongst different offender groups (DeVall et al., 2017). Additionally, there are differences in the programs that can skew research outcomes in relation to whether rehabilitation programs are effective (Visher et al., 2017). Research tends to focus on either recidivism or gang membership, viewing the two issues as separate but not intertwined (Dooley et al., 2014).

The majority of research focuses on quantitative evaluation of reentry services, however Valera et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study to explore the reentry services of male and female offenders in New York. The researchers found successful reentry themes that included "linkage to society, institutional and community anchors, social supports, and personal epiphany" (Valera et al., 2017, p. 419). Linkage to society consists

of a discharge plan from incarceration to reentry needs, was identified as a need that was often unmet when individuals were released, such as having appointments for mental health and medical treatment. It was then found that the wait for services was long and that individuals could deteriorate during this timeframe or that lack of immediate access to these services could result in not meeting supervisory requirements (Valera et al., 2017). Additionally, support from community agencies such as social services assisted in meeting needs that, if unmet, could impact recidivism, such as support from social services (Valera et al., 2017). It was found that the coordination among agencies to meet needs was essential. Social supports were determined to help support the reentry individual in breaking old patterns and establishing new routines that helped to reduce recidivism (Valera et al., 2017). Lastly, but not least, personal cognitive commitment to change and gained insight into the need for change was found to be a strong motivator toward positive reentry experiences (Valera et al., 2017). These moments were often triggered by a significant life event that helped to push the individual toward change.

Marginalized populations have unique reentry needs that are often overlooked in current research as well as rehabilitation services (Valera et al., 2017). Although alternative sentencing programs that focus on treatment have been found to reduce recidivism, it has been shown that race, gender, offense type, location, and initial risk assessment scores interact to impact outcomes, with African American males having the highest recidivism rates across all types of programs outcomes, such as rearrests, revocation, expiration, and technical violations (Steinmetz & Henderson, 2016). Steinmetz and Henderson (2016) found that minority groups had the highest rate of

probation technical violations as well as being at risk for false positives on risk assessments. Ethnic minorities were found to have higher rates of negative outcomes than whites when it comes to probation outcomes, with this being especially true when gender interacts with ethnicity (Steinmetz & Henderson, 2016).

Most of rehabilitation services for the gang affiliated reentry population occur post release, which is a possible reason for why recidivism rates may be so high as the needs of this population require significant amount of interventions, that once released these individuals become easily reengaged with previous lifestyle patterns (Cook et al., 2015). Employment support is not enough to reduce recidivism and that these types of interventions need to be paired with support in other life domains such as financial management, family reunification, behavioral health, reduction in gang involvement, and basic life skills (Cook et al., 2015). Additionally, it is essential to strengthen and foster prosocial family bonds while a person is incarcerated. Cognitive behavioral treatment is the most effective way at changing the automatic thoughts and behaviors that go along with criminal behavior (Cook et al., 2015; Drake, 2018). Crime prevention strategies, such as early education and intervention are the most cost-effective ways to reduce recidivism amongst gang affiliated offenders (Drake, 2018). Unfortunately, these types of interventions are not as applicable to individuals who have already joined a gang.

Given the strong influence that association with deviant peers has on risk of recidivism (Duwe & Johnson, 2016) it is important to consider this factor when developing interventions for the gang affiliated reentry population, and the impact that developing prosocial bonds can have on this population (Duwe & Johnson, 2016).

Several different programs that match inmates with mentors while incarcerated have found that these connections help to reduce recidivism rates for program participation (Duwe & Johnson, 2016). The individuals who received visits from volunteers averaged 35.5 months before recidivating, compared to 30.6 for the individuals who did not receive community visits (Duwe & Johnson, 2016). However, it should be noted that females, the elderly, and Christians were more likely to get visitation with volunteers, and that these groups are significantly less likely to recidivate in the first place (Duwe & Johnson, 2016). Additionally, the researchers found that while visitations from prosocial community members and family members helped to reduce misconduct while incarceration, the visits were the most beneficial to reducing recidivism when the visits occurred closer to reentry. Duwe and Johnson (2016) also found that visits from unhealthy relationships, such as ex-partners or individuals who support a deviant lifestyle, increased the risk of recidivism. This is an important aspect to consider when including visitation as an intervention strategy. Additionally, prosocial bonds have often been severed due to deviant behavior and substance use, which is why the previous mentioned addition of family therapy by Datchi et al. (2016) is a crucial component of reducing recidivism.

Boxer, Docherty, Ostermann, Kubik, and Veysey (2017) conducted a study on the effectiveness of multisystemic therapy as an intervention for gang affiliated youth. The results found no significant difference in outcomes between gang affiliated and non-gang affiliated youth (Boxer et al., 2017). Baglivio et al. (2017) found that placement in a residential treatment program upon reentry into society assisted in reducing recidivism

risks regarding education level, use of free time, relationships, substance use, antisocial attitudes, and levels of aggression however, it did not impact employability, family dynamic factors, and mental health issues. Houser et al. (2018) found that when reentry individuals did not return to their previous residence their chances of reoffending were reduced, even when these people had longstanding cycles of recidivism, indicating there may be benefit in rehabilitating individuals in an alternative environment. Cook et al. (2015) conducted a study of inmates who received interventions while incarcerated that focused on reducing gang involvements, substance abuse treatment, and job readiness paired with guaranteed post-released employment for the first 6 months. It was found that participation increased employment rates and overall income (Cook et al., 2015). However, the income earned for both the participants and nonparticipants were not above poverty line nor enough to support a family.

While there has been a trend in research focusing on the interaction between individual and environmental risk factors on the impact of recidivism there is still need for further exploration (Houser et al., 2018). While there needs to be community resources to support change, the initial desire for change needs to come from the individual for outside supports to be most effective (Berg & Cobbina, 2017). Berg and Cobbina (2017) conducted a qualitative study that explored how the cognitive process impacted recidivism rates in reentry individuals who returned to impoverished communities. A study conducted by Abate and Venta (2018) found that an individual's perceived chances of successful reentry impacted rehabilitation interventions for ethnic minorities but not whites. The authors findings imply that race played a factor in an

individual's reentry needs therefore interventions and services may be most effective if tailored to ethnic group's needs. It was also reported that providing treatment to gang members while incarcerated and as part of the reentry service process decreased their chances of recidivism and that the treatment was most beneficial when ex-gang members were a part of the treatment process (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). This supports findings by Caudill (2010) that suggested that gang affiliated individuals are at the highest risk for influence to reoffend based upon their gang identity early in the reentry stages, and that over time the influence of gang-affiliation decreases. Further research is needed to gain understanding into how the intersectionality of different risk factors impacts the interventions to reduce recidivism rates, specifically in gang affiliated individual (Bender et al., 2016).

Summary

When it comes to reducing recidivism, knowledge is power. There is current knowledge regarding risk factors and effective intervention, however the gap suggests that there is minimal research on how a gang affiliated reentry impacts engagement with rehabilitation services and how the gang identity impacts recidivism risk (Caudill, 2010; Dooley et al., 2014; Spooner et al., 2017). The current study began to fill that gap, by taking an intersectionality-systems approach to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals providing a narrative of how their identities interact and impact how that identity impacts their interactions in a reciprocal relationship with the social environment. By gaining insight into their experiences with rehabilitative services through this dynamic lens, it can assist to shape reentry services for the marginalized

population and begin to ship the narrative from oppression to empowerment, with the ability to facilitate social change (Martin, 2016).

The current research study will assist in gaining further insight into the interplay of different risk factors and how they may impact the individual's response to interventions. However, there is minimal research on gang affiliated youth and the effectiveness of treatment. There is also limited research on how the interaction of these different stigmatizing identities can impact the engagement with community resources and reentry type services. Windsong (2018) stated that there is a need to incorporate intersectionality into research framework to explore the experiences of marginalized populations, as their voices are missing from current research. This framework also helps researchers to understand the impact of systematic oppression and how social constructs reinforce the process of oppression for marginalized populations (Windsong, 2018). This is the direction that Willison and O'Brien (2016) recommended research takes to move away from a justice system that reinforces social oppression. The current study will begin to fill the gap. In the next chapter I will begin to review the methodology of the current study, including the design of the current study, participant recruitment and data analysis

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. Research has shown that gang-affiliation increases risk of recidivism (Boxer et al., 2017). Additionally, there was a gap in the literature regarding how having a gang identity influences individuals' interaction with the social environment and how it intersects with other identities to create a person's social location (Caudill, 2010; Dooley et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017; Spooner et al, 2017). In this study, I used an IPA to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals (see Hlavka et al., 2015; Storey, 2017; Windsong, 2018). IPA allowed for an in-depth exploration on the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals (see Alase, 2017).

In this chapter, I discuss the population and sampling methods used in depth to provide insight into the participants of the study because that can impact the research data. I developed appropriate interview questions and then utilized safeguards to ensure appropriate data collection and analysis (see Alase, 2017). Bias and potential influence during the data collection process are also discussed to provide transparency in the research process. Additionally, the procedures and instrumentation will be explored so that future researchers are able to understand this study. I will conclude the chapter by reviewing issues of trustworthiness and ethical safeguards that were put in place for the study.

Research Design and Rationale

I developed the following research question to guide this study:

How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations?

Phenomenon of Study

The overall phenomenon being explored was recidivism, which consists of reoffending after a prior interaction with the justice system (National Institute of Justice, 2014). Specifically, I focused on recidivism in the context of gang affiliated reentry individuals' experiences with their environmental systems. Reentry consists of the transition from being in a correctional facility into the community (National Institute of Justice, 2014). While there is certainly a stigma associated with being previously incarcerated, having a gang affiliation can add to the stigma as well as create additional barriers to utilizing reentry services (Dooley et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). This can include increased association with deviant peers, increased pressure to reengage in criminal behavior, and limited access to already sparse resources such as housing (Spooner et al., 2017). These gang affiliated risks for recidivism interact with a myriad of other risk factors to create a major social problem (Dooley et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017; Spooner et al., 2017).

Systems theory explores how different social and environmental systems impact a person's development and trajectory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). A person's intersectionality refers to the way in which their multiple identities interact to place their social location of either oppression or privilege (Moradi, 2017).

Research Design

The study was exploratory in nature, making qualitative methodology the most suitable approach for this study. A qualitative design allows the researcher to explore how individuals make meaning of a social problem (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

Qualitative research is inductive because the themes that are identified during data analysis develop into larger themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Since the purpose of this study was to explore experiences based upon socially constructed identities and their placement on a social location of oppression, it was essential to adopt an explorative methodological research design because there were assumptions made but no testing of a theory. Use of a qualitative method allowed me to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals through the lens of intersectionality and systems theory.

The research questions tend to drive the methodology (Creswell, 2014), and the research question in this study was exploratory, leading to the use of a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology has been deemed most appropriate when the research questions indicate the exploration of participants' experiences through a social-cultural lens (Creswell, 2014; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Qualitative methodology allows for the in-depth exploration of the participants' identity and context (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), which was ideal for this study. I interacted with the participants to obtain further information on their identities, the social systems they engage with, and how their identities interact with environment to impact their reentry experiences.

While a quantitative methodology was considered due to the benefits of including a larger number of participants and increasing the generalizability of the results (see

Creswell, 2014), this methodology did not align with the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the reentry experiences of gang affiliated individuals; therefore, a quantitative study would not have allowed for the in-depth exploration that a qualitative methodology creates. A quantitative study would be a better fit to explore cause and effect or to test a theory and/or hypothesis that has already been established (Creswell, 2014; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Future research may include a quantitative component to determine whether the themes identified in this study can crossover to a broader population.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is a process that explores how participants make sense of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). IPA is based upon the assumption that people are “actively engaged in interpreting the events, objects, and people in their lives. To examine this process, IPA draws upon the fundamental principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 8). Phenomenology refers to the reductive process of attempting to identify the factors of an experience that make that experience unique (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This allows for a focus on how an event is interpreted by individuals. Hermeneutics refers to understanding a person’s mindset and language to accurately interpret their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). IPA incorporates this by the researcher attempting to interpret the experiences of participants based upon the views of the person but also trying to explore how and why this person came to find this sense of meaning (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Idiography refers to an in-depth analysis of experience and context (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Therefore, IPA

involves an in-depth exploration of a specific person's experiences to understand them, prior to making any generalizing statements (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). IPA does not explore causation or look for a rooted theory; rather, it uses the data to begin to identify themes in experiences of participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The researcher may compare and contrast participants experiences to understand the larger phenomenon of the specific population when using IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

In this study, I used an IPA approach. An IPA allows the researcher to explore participant experiences, the meanings attributed to those experiences, and the psychological process of how those meanings are established (Storey, 2007). This approach worked well with intersectionality and systems theory because these theories can be applied to how an individual establishes the meaning of these experiences. The gang affiliated reentry population has a unique set of experiences and identities that can shape their experiences and give a unique meaning to these experiences. Due to the limited amount of research in this area and the complexity of how unique each participants' intersecting identities are, an IPA research method was most appropriate to achieve the purpose of the study. Use of open dialogue with participants and asking questions that included not only their own identity but experiences with other labels assisted the me in gaining insights not only into potential identities and their interaction but how they may impact the participants' experiences. Researchers have shown that there are many different factors that impact recidivism and successful reentry (Bender et al., 2016; Gunnison et.al., 2015; Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; Zortman et al., 2016); however, the gap addressed in this study was how the different

factors intersect to create the collective experiences. For this reason, I chose an IPA qualitative research methodology.

There are other types of qualitative research designs, such as ethnography, case study, and biography; however, the only other option that I considered for this study was a narrative approach. While ethnography does involve a social group (Creswell, 2014), it does not allow for exploration of how the individuals in this group interpret and assign meaning to events, which was an essential component for my exploration of reentry experiences of gang affiliated individuals. Other options explored were case study and biography; however, these designs were also deemed not appropriate for this study. While these options may have allowed for in-depth detail of experience, where they fall short is they do not explore how the individual is assigning meaning to these experiences and the experiences are not as focused on the current experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). A narrative inquiry utilizes individuals' stories, often obtained through direct conversation, to explore their experiences and how their narrative has been created (Creswell, 2014). The story of how stigma is experienced by gang affiliated reentry individuals could be understood through a narrative approach; however, I determined that the narrative approach was not appropriate for the study because it would incorporate a more comprehensive view of their life experiences, which could take away from the exploration of reentry experiences of the gang affiliated reentry individual by broadening the scope to life experiences. In this study, I explored more recent reentry experiences and how the individuals have made meaning of their reentry experiences, which is why IPA was chosen. The participants have shared experiences because they are all involved

in the justice system and have used some type of reentry services; however, they all have unique background experiences, identities, and system interactions that can impact how they interpret and assign meaning to these experiences (see Alase, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

In this study, as the researcher, I collected, coded, and analyzed the data and drew conclusions based upon the experiences of the participants through their self-disclosure (see Alase, 2017). I played an active professional role in this study because I conducted the interviews and engaged with the participants. As the interviews were semistructured, I followed up with each participant's responses in a slightly different manner and attempted to gain a clear picture, while not guiding their narratives. I established rapport with the participants to establish an environment of trust and to inspire them to be honest and facilitate engagement in the interview process.

I had no prior relationship with any of the participants, so there were no concerns regarding dual relationship influence. While participants did not have a prior relationship with me, I did have experiences working with justice-involved individuals, both while incarcerated and as part of reentry services. I also had no current or prior relationship with any agency that was indirectly involved in the data collection process.

To analyze IPA style research, I needed to be aware of my own implicit bias and experiences and then be able to set those aside to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences (see Alase, 2017; Storey, 2007). For this study, it was essential that I truly listen to the experiences of the participants while attempting to place themselves in the lived experiences of the participants (see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

It was also important to recognize that my personal experiences shaped my research experiences and how meaning was assigned in a unique way to interpret the participants' narratives (see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). While there is no testing of a hypothesis, research has suggested that the experiences of the marginalized populations are those of oppression and differential treatment (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016; Windsong, 2018); therefore, to avoid any bias, I analyzed the participants' interview responses setting aside my assumptions that this indeed is true. I was constantly checking in with myself to ensure my bias was not impacting the analysis process (see Creswell, 2014; Storey, 2007).

Another potential bias that I held was a belief that social systems have influence on a person's social location and that, while people make their own choices, the options they see are shaped by the environment. This could have created a view of empathy toward gang affiliated offenders, which may have impacted the interpretation of their experiences, because I tend to view gang involvement as due to systemic and environmental influence over personal choice. Additionally, personal experiences in working with this population have exposed me to first-hand views of the systematic barriers that can inhibit change. Therefore, I tend to view the rehabilitation of gang affiliated reentry individuals as a systems problem, in which less self-responsibility may be placed on the offender. Since I was aware of this bias, the interviews were conducted so as not to lead the participants toward this conclusion (e.g., to not place most of the responsibility on the systems around them). Since I was actively engaging with the participants in a face-to-face manner, there was the potential for other types of influences

on self-reports, which will be further explored in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

Methodology

Participants

Population. The population of interest was gang affiliated reentry individuals. The sample participants included adult male and female gang affiliated individuals from a diverse ethnic background who were located in California. This study did not exclude any ethnic groups.

Sampling method. The sampling method was purposeful, which is the recommended sampling method for IPA (Alase, 2017). Purposeful sampling is when the sample is chosen based upon participants having certain characteristics that reflect the population of interest and purpose of the study (Alase, 2017). The recruitment process included convenience sampling, which is a non-randomized sampling method in which participants are recruited based upon access of location (Alase, 2017).

For this study, recruitment was conducted through several areas in which reentry service are provided in California. Participants were recruited through flyers posted in public locations near the reentry service agencies. The adverts posted near the service providers' agencies provided potential participants with my contact information. Participants received a \$10 McDonalds gift card, to thank participants for engaging in the study. Interested potential participants were screened to ensure the sample reflects the population of interest.

Prior to participant recruitment the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Walden University, to ensure the research follows the highest level of ethics and protects the participants. The IRB approval number for this study was 01-23-19-0615816. Flyers were hung in public locations near reentry service providers such as probation, law offices, halfway houses, and treatment providers. Individuals were asked to call me if interested in participating in the study. Over the phone, I conducted a brief screening of eligibility, provided an overview of the study, and discussed the time commitment. If both parties felt participation was a good fit an interview appointment was scheduled. Prior to conducting the study informed consent, in which the general purpose, risks and benefits of participating in the research study, and confidentiality was reviewed with the participants and obtained.

Participants. IPA recommends that the participants be as similar to the population of interest as possible, to be sure that the experiences are as similar as appropriate (Alase, 2017). Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) stated that between six to eight participants in recommended to allow for accurate exploration of similarities and differences. For this reason, it is important to keep the sample as similar in other aspects as possible to ensure that the experiences explore those of that population. However, since participation was voluntary it is important to note that equal representation of identities of participants may not have been available due to the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the justice system. Therefore, the participants may have reflected the ethnic groups of highest population based upon region of recruitment. Recruitment included multiple locations to attempt to have a comprehensive group of participants.

Inclusion criteria included a history of incarceration for at least a continuous year to ensure that participants have experienced a significant length away from society prior to reentry, as these adjustments impact reentry experiences. Additionally, participants' backgrounds included a history of recidivism that included at least two episodes of incarceration (any length for secondary period of incarceration) to ensure that participants had multiple reentry experiences so that they have had experiences of rehabilitation and reoffending, as this relates to issues of recidivism. Additionally, gang-affiliation included any type of gang membership (prison gang, street gang, or both). There were no vulnerable populations recruited and recruitment methodology did not require prescreening for vulnerable populations as this information is not related to the study.

Since IPA consists of in-depth exploration of how the participants assign meaning to their experiences, a relatively small sample size is appropriate, from two to 25, however normally samples are small and consist of no more than twelve (Alase, 2017; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The current study included five participants, this number allowed me to gain insight on reentry experiences and allowed for saturation of the data. To begin to gain insight on stigmatic identities and their impact on reentry services it is important to begin to develop an alternative narrative, which requires in-depth exploration as well as enough information to begin to create a picture of information that may reflect larger group experiences. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) stated that between six to eight participants is recommended to allow for accurate exploration of similarities and differences of the participants.

Instrumentation

For this study, audio recorded semistructured interviews were used. The researcher developed the interview format to align with the purpose of the study. Alase (2017) recommended utilizing approximately two main questions and then eight subquestions that attempt to uncover what the researcher wants to explore, in this case the reentry experiences based upon systems interactions and intersectionality. I dressed in dark neutral clothing to provide as minimal researcher influence on the data collection process as possible. However, my personal appearance may have had a certain meaning to participants which may have impacted participants' disclosure. To address this issue, I developed as much rapport as possible to assist in the collection of data. Additionally, for IPA the researcher is an individual who has their own lived experiences and who has assigned meaning to their own experiences, while also having access to participants' experiences and attempting to discern how they made meaning based upon information given (Alase, 2017). This is important as it can play a role in the data analysis process as I needed to suspend their own bias to fully understand the participant's experiences.

I developed the open-ended interview questions based upon the purpose of the study, which was to explore the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals, guided by a review of the literature and the suggestions that arose from prior research. The questions explored overall experiences as well as looked at systems that may influence the individual and looked at how this may have impacted their interactions with others and how they made meaning of their worldview. Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol (2016) and Windsong (2018) provided insight on how to incorporate intersectionality in a qualitative

interview and gave suggestions on how to develop qualitative research questions in general. I utilized the gaps that were found in the literature review and future research recommendations to guide the development. To establish sufficiency, I consulted with two other professionals to ensure that the interview questions were able to answer the research question.

The following demographic information was explored during the initial part of the interview, in terms of how they view themselves as well as perceived identity by others (age, gender, race, gang affiliation) while other demographic information (criminal history, and past and current reentry services utilized) was used to allow for context for the exploration of these individual's lived experiences. The semistructured questions were as follows:

1. Please describe how you identify yourself (gender, race, gang membership)?
 - a. How do you think others see you based on your appearance?
 - b. How does this impact you?
2. Please describe your reentry experiences
 - a. What were your experiences with service providers?
 - b. Please describe factors that you believe may be influencing this experience.
 - c. How do you feel your appearance has impacted this?
 - d. How would you describe providers responded to your being a part of a gang?
 - i. What did this mean for you?

3. What are your goals for rehabilitation?
 - a. What factors have been most helpful to keep you on track for your goal?
 - b. What are your biggest barriers or risks for reoffending?
 - i. How might you overcome this?
 - c. How have these risks and supports shaped your experiences?
 - d. How would you say your current or previous gang membership impacts risk?
 - i. And what does this mean to you?
4. How do you feel your overall appearance has impacted your reentry experiences?
5. How about your gang membership and reentry experiences?
6. What environmental systems (such as a person, agency, or changes in laws) have had the greatest influence on your reentry?
 - a. How have these influenced you?
 - b. Why do you think they have had that impact?
 - c. How may your gang membership impact your interaction with these systems?
 - i. And what did this mean for you?

Procedures

Data collection. IPA attempts to explore the experiences of participants by collecting detailed amounts of data, in which the researcher should obtain as much information as possible (Alase, 2017). Additionally, the data collection process should be

participant centered, with a format that allows for questions but lets the participant share large quantities of information (Alase, 2017). Since data collection is a dynamic process, a researcher cannot be prepared for all possibilities (Alase, 2017), however preparations will be made to ensure a seamless data collection process. I conducted and recorded face-to-face semistructured interviews utilizing the questions previously developed and discussed.

I have a background in conducting clinical interviews, which was of assistance during the data collection process, especially for establishing rapport, which is an essential part of IPA data collection that should not be overlooked (Alase, 2017). I utilized an audio recording device as well as had a backup audio recording device to prevent technical difficulties from impacting the data collection process. Additionally, I found a room that ensured confidentiality while limiting distractions to ensure quality data was collected. This would normally be a room in one of the host agencies, however often these agencies are seen as a punitive reentry service provider, which could have impact participants comfort level (Alase, 2017). Additionally, it could have impacted participants confidentiality. Since this was the case a neutral public place was utilized, a conference room at the local library closest to the participant. The times of the interviews were agreed upon with the participants and worked around their schedules. It was anticipated that interviews would last approximately 1 hour however, I allowed several hours in between interviews to ensure that time did not impact data collection. While the researcher did not require a follow-up interview, had this been the case the researcher planned to contact the participant. The debriefing process described below was utilized

upon completion of the interview. Upon completion of the data collection I transcribed the data verbatim.

Debriefing. Upon termination of the interview, a debriefing occurred in which participants were told the overall purpose of the study as well as allowed time to process their experiences. There was the potential for the topic to trigger strong feelings, which the researcher addressed by providing a debrief sheet (See Appendix) that linked participants to supportive agencies. Had participants appear distressed during the interview, I would have stopped the interview and linked participant to a service provider for more intensive services. During the informed consent process, participants were informed of their option to terminate the interview midway, participants would have been reminded of this had they become distressed during the interview. It will consisted of reviewing the participants' confidentiality and ensuring that any questions that may have come up during the interview process were answered. Participants were contacted for member checking and after the study if they were interested in receiving a summary of the results.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis in IPA is a fluid process which can be unique for each researcher and their research method, however there are some basic steps that all researchers must complete. The data analysis process allowed for the researcher to identify themes that emerged from the data, as opposed to having to utilize preexisting phenomenon which can add to the authenticity of the findings by allowing the data to guide the analysis (Alase, 2017). According to Storey (2007), the basic steps were familiarizing yourself

with the data, identifying themes, linking the themes, and organizing the data. Becoming familiar with the data involved the researcher reading the transcripts from the qualitative interviews several times (Storey, 2007). Through reading the data several times themes I begin to identify themes. It was important to also be sure to identify your own reactions to the data and take thorough notes of initial reactions and patterns (Storey, 2007). I then labeled the themes based upon what was reoccurring in the notes of the transcripts and analyzed the themes. Once the themes were identified I then reviewed the themes to look for reoccurring patterns among the data or connections between previous identified themes (Storey, 2007). The data were then organized by main themes, secondary themes, and then the data that supports these themes (Storey, 2007).

Coding process. I coded by hand, as this method is in a stronger alignment with the participant guided data of IPA. While hand coding was time consuming, it also allowed for further exploration of the data. IPA utilized the coding process to identify themes that related to how individuals were interpreting and making meaning of their experiences by attempting to understand their background and exploring the data through the eyes of the participants (Alase, 2017). The IPA process allowed for the coding process to explore how participants have made meaning of their experiences. The coding process that I utilized is as follows:

1. Transcription, verbatim typing of the data into a document that was then reviewed
2. Familiarizing self with the data, the researcher suspended their own beliefs and bias to read the data as objectively as possible, as well as attempted to

truly immerse themselves into the experiences of the participant to understand their lived experiences, while reading the data with the purpose of understanding not coding (Alase, 2017).

3. Read through the data for codes, looked for common phrases or words that were present in a participant's data, to begin to break the data into smaller parts that can be understood by the researcher, this process was completed several times for accuracy and to condense the data (Alase, 2017; Storey, 2007).
4. Organize the codes into themes or patterns across the data (Alase, 2017; Storey, 2007). This consisted of organizing the data of participants into common themes and then placing those themes into connecting larger themes or clusters and then subthemes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). These themes became apparent as they begin to reoccur on the theme side of the coding document (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative data tends to be more subjective in nature, resulting in a higher possibility that different researchers will identify different themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). However, there are techniques that a researcher can employ to improve the trustworthiness of the data to increase credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility refers to the ability of the data to be believable and accurate (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985). One technique to increase credibility, prolonged exposure, involves rich exposure to the data based upon time spent with the

participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As I spent more time with the participants rapport is established, which results in larger amounts of information being obtained, which resulted in higher quality of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It also allowed for myself to fully learn about the group, and identify and explore any potential bias that may have come up during the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation refers to utilizing multiple sources of data to increase the quality of data as it allows for exploration of multiple views of the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of multiple participants assisted the researcher in gaining multiple view points of the gang affiliated reentry population and their reentry experiences to fully explore the phenomenon. Member checking is a method of increasing credibility that consists of the participants reviewing the data collected by the researcher to ensure accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were provided with a interview summary to give them the opportunity to review and correct any misinterpretations that they may identify.

Transferability relates to the ability of the findings to be held true across other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended obtaining rich descriptions so that the reader can determine the context of the research study. The large quantities of data obtained by this researcher assisted in increasing authenticity of the data (Alase, 2017). To assist in transferability, I provided rich data in Chapter 4, to allow the reader to immerse themselves in the experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals.

Dependability relates to the quality of the researcher's methodology of the study, in relation to the data collection method and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I provided

in-depth descriptions of the participants and the data collection process to provide an accurate picture of the process of the study and the population to which the results can apply. Through working with the dissertation committee, I ensured that there was dependability in this study, as others had access to the procedures and data collection process.

Similarly, confirmability relates to the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985). To assist with this I explored any bias that may be influencing in the data collection as well as the analysis process to provide transparency to the research and make these possible influential factors viable to the audience. A reflective journal was used to help myself identify and process any potential bias that may come up during this process (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985). Additionally, I organized the data in a way that, if reviewed, would follow a clear pattern that represents that reported finding and analysis of the dissertation.

Ethical Procedures

Prior to any recruitment or data collection, IRB approval was obtained to ensure that the study adheres to the highest ethical standards. The IRB approval number is 01-23-19-0615816. I utilized the guidelines established by the APA to develop an ethical research plan. The compensation amount for participants was an appropriate reflection of time spent engaging in the research project without being a coercive factor for participation (APA, 2016). Informed consent was obtained and documented prior to conducting the study. It included consent to be recorded (APA, 2016). To protect

participants, APA (2016) required that research protect the confidentiality of the participants.

To ensure confidentiality I did not identify participants by name but by number. Additionally, the recordings were destroyed upon completion of accurate transcription (Alase, 2017). The transcripts were kept in a locked file and there was only be a handwritten key that connects the participants to their pseudonymity, so that only the researcher was able to identify participants (APA, 2016). These documents will be destroyed after 5 years, to adhere to APA (2016) guidelines for record keeping. Utilizing multiple recruiting areas also helped to ensure confidentiality as it widened the potential participant pool. The wide net of participants ensured that participants were unable to be identified through quotes in the dissertation text. Debriefing occurred as accordance to APA (2016) standards, as discussed in previous sections.

Summary

The methodology of the current study was discussed in a manner to allow for transparency and replication. Since the purpose of the study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals, an IPA method was chosen to allow myself to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and how they make meaning of those experiences. To do this I explored, acknowledged, and set aside their own bias. The sampling method was purposeful to reflect the population of interest and participants were all be gang affiliated and met inclusion criteria. The data was recorded and transcribed so that I could then code and analysis the data using IPA fundamentals. Issues of trustworthiness were discussed and addressed while ethical

considerations were employed to ensure the highest standards of research were upheld. In the next chapter I will review the implementation of the methods previously discussed in the actual conduction of this research study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Recidivism is a multifaceted social problem, with high direct and indirect costs to society (DeHart, Shapiro, & Clone, 2018; Ritzer, 2004). Risk factors for recidivism are dynamic and include childhood, personal, and environmental influences (Tarpey & Friend, 2016; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; Ward & Fortune, 2016). The recidivism rate is about two thirds within the first 3 years of reentry (National Institute of Justice, 2014); however, if a reentry individual is gang affiliated it increases their risk of recidivism by 6% (Dooley et al., 2014). When an individual is gang affiliated, they often face additional barriers to reentry such as accessing resources and increased stigma (Dooley et al., 2014; Peterson & Panfil, 2017). There is a gap in the literature in relation to gang affiliated reentry individuals; consequently, the purpose of the study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. In this study, I applied an intersectionality and systems theory framework to explore the lived experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. The research question was: How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations?

In this chapter, I will review the current study by discussing the setting and participant demographics. Additionally, the data collection and analysis methods will be described as well as evidence of data trustworthiness. I will also present the results of the study.

Setting

The interviews took place in a medium-sized, urban city in California. The specific location of the interviews was in a private room at a local library, as agreed upon as an appropriate place between me and the participants. There were no interruptions in four of the five interviews; however, in the third interview, someone opened the door to the interview room and then shut it as soon as they saw people were in there. This interruption did not seem to have any major impact on the interview dynamics. I did not have any current or previous affiliation with any participants or locations where recruitment and interviews took place. Additionally, there were no known external factors that may have been influenced or impacted the participants at the time of the interview. The incentive to participate, a \$10-dollar McDonalds gift card, was not large enough to be an influencing factor for the participants because it is close to minimum wage pay for 1 hour of time.

Demographics

A total of five individuals participated in the study. All were over the age of 18 years old and identified as ethnic minorities (i.e., Latino and African American). Participants were both male and female and lived in California. All participants were currently or previously gang affiliated, had been incarcerated more than once, and spent at least a consecutive year incarcerated. Due to the small sample size, I will not provide further demographic details to protect participants' confidentiality.

Data Collection

Once I obtained informed consent from the five participants, I conducted semistructured interviews with them and audio recorded their responses to questions I had developed. The interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes, although they were scheduled for an hour. In general, the gang affiliated population tends to speak very directly and to be content focused over feelings focused. It is not uncommon to have very short answers and guarded responses, even when these populations are comfortable with the person they are speaking to; this is partially due to the nature of the behavior that they engage in and conditioned responses to protect themselves from negative ramifications of the behavior (Goldman et al., 2014). This population also tends to have more of a content-focused communication style, compared to process style (Goldman et al., 2014). Additionally, there is often a lack of insight or deflection in relation to feelings (Goldman et al., 2014).

Responses to many of the “what did this mean to you” questions I asked were comprised of more content-focused storytelling rather than a discussion of their own feelings. As I stated earlier, this was to be expected from this population. So, while not having much content in relation to meanings made from their experiences, the data are still reflective of the gang affiliated reentry experiences in the context that the participants placed them into. Although the interviews were shorter than I planned for, it does not appear that there was a lack of content, and I assumed that had there been more participants, the interview pattern would have continued in this manner. This lack of participant insight into how they made meaning of their experiences (see Goldman et al,

2014) is in itself something that was further learned about this population in the current study. This outcome is further discussed in the limitations section of Chapter 5. There were no variations to the data collection process as described in Chapter 3, and no unusual circumstances arose during the process.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the five participants appeared to reach saturation. When analyzing the data, I followed IPA guidelines as discussed in Chapter 3. Initially, I transcribed the audio recordings into transcripts and then printed them out. Next, I read the transcripts individually several times in order to familiarize myself with the data (see Alase, 2017). During this process, I used a reflective journal to be sure that my bias and beliefs were not influencing my experience of understanding the participants' lived experiences. The transcripts were then read individually with the purpose of beginning to establish codes (see Alase, 2017). I utilized colored pens to represent different codes, using codes from the first reading to start the process. Next, each data set was read and underlined with different colors to reflect the codes. This process was done several times; since the transcription was read multiple times, codes were sometimes relabeled to reflect emerging themes (see Alase, 2017).

Once each individual data set was coded and then examined for themes, I then made a chart to organize the themes across the data sets (see Alase, 2017). This was accomplished by writing the themes down and checking for similarities and differences between the data sets. The data produced three themes and eight subthemes. The themes

are displayed in Table 1. The main themes were present in all the participants' data sets, while subthemes were present in at least three data sets.

Table 1

Themes and Subthemes

Negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang-identity	Influence of gang-identity on reentry location	Appreciation of support received despite gang-affiliation
Stigma of a gang identity	Relocation	Unconditional support
Lack of agency support	Avoiding gang influence	Positive agency interactions
Differential treatment based on gang-identity	Feelings of pressure and loyalty to the gang preventing positive change	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To provide evidence of trustworthiness, I established the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. I utilized several methods to ensure credibility. One method, identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), was prolonged exposure. I spent time establishing rapport with the participants in order to gain rich data sets to better understand this population. Additionally, triangulation was used to establish credibility in this study by ensuring multiple sources were used until saturation was reached (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the data by providing the participants with a brief verbal summary of the interviews once they had concluded. Summarizing the interview with the participants after data collection provided them with the opportunity to clear up any misconceptions that may have occurred during the data collection. Member checking allowed the participants to check for accuracy and that the data reflected the message they were attempting to convey to the me (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I obtained rich, thick data through the semistructured interviews of participants. To establish transferability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the researcher should display as much data as necessary so that readers can make their connections to the themes from the data. In the results section of this chapter, I will use direct quotes to provide readers with access to the data so that they can examine it themselves.

The detailed methods section in Chapter 3 helped to establish dependability of the methodology used in this study for the reader. This ensures that someone can review the data collection methods to ensure that they were done in an appropriate manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also strengthened the dependability of this study by working with the dissertation committee because they were able to ensure that the methods were held to appropriate standards.

Lastly, I established conformability of this study. Throughout the data collection process, I used a reflective journal to explore automatic thoughts and reactions to ensure inherent bias did not influence the study (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data were also organized and stored in a way that it can be accessed and reviewed to see the process I used to collect and analyze the data if audited (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The purpose of the study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. I conducted audio recorded, semistructured interviews with five participants, lasting an average of 35 minutes. I designed the interview questions to answer the following research question: How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations? Upon completion of the interviews

and the coding, data analysis revealed three major themes: negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang identity, influence of gang identity on reentry location, and appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation. These themes were present in all the data sets in some way, while there were some additional information present in interviews that did not present as a theme, there were no major discrepancies present in the data sets. It is also important to note that while there may be more of a focus on content in the themes as opposed to experiences and meanings, this is standard for the population being studied as was previously discussed in the data analysis section of Chapter 5. The information gathered adds to the current literature because it allows the gang affiliated reentry individuals voice to have a space in current literature and brings unique factors related to gang identity on reentry into the discussion.

Theme 1: Negative Experiences in Relation to Interactions with Others Based on Gang Identity

One theme that prevailed throughout all the interviews was participants reporting negative experiences interacting with reentry service providers, which was attributed to their appearance as a gang member and the service providers' preconceived bias towards them based upon how they viewed the population. People often attribute a certain style of dressing; certain tattoos; language; and nonverbal cues, such as stance, as a way to identify gang members (Bergen-Cico et al., 2014). Within this theme, I identified three subthemes of stigma of a gang identity, lack of agency support, and differential treatment based on gang identity.

Subtheme 1.1: Stigma of a gang identity. All five participants reported experiencing stigma based upon their gang identity as part of their reentry experiences. P1 described stigma for gang reentry individuals as a whole, “They don’t look at us as people or at our background experiences or successes. It is once a criminal always a criminal.” P4 also described stigma as a group experience based upon perceived appearance as a gang member, “They can look at us and they’ve been at their jobs for a long time, just one look and they can tell if we are just a convict, a gang banger, or someone really dangerous.”

Meanwhile P2, P3, and P5 all described stigma on a more personal level. P2 described how being perceived as a gang member resulted in service providers’ preconceptions, “They don’t understand they think they know everything about you without even knowing you.” P3 described similar experiences of stigma based upon appearance related to gang membership, “It’s like they didn’t believe in me, didn’t think I was good for anything and not gonna change. They would look at me sideways. If something bad happened to me they didn’t believe it.” P3 took a more personal approach in describing their interactions with agency employees based upon their gang appearance, “My PO [probation officer] always expected me to fail, they would be planning for my failure not helping me. Trying to catch me slipping up.”

P5 reported being aware of the stigma related to looking like a gang member and attempting to change their appearance to avoid it, “I make sure I dress to hide my tats for things that are important to me now, like at my job. People will see them and be like woah I can’t even image you in that way.”

Subtheme 1.2: Lack of agency support. All five of the participants reported that there was a lack of agency support available for gang affiliated reentry individuals, often due to lack of resources and a lack of understanding of the unique needs of this population, and a lack of ability to engage them in services. Per P4, “there is no government system out there that has any type of positive supports for any type of gang members, they can say they have this program, that program, they really don’t.” P1 stated, “the services they offer don’t all address the needs of these people [gang members]. They need to know how hard it is to get out of the gang.” P2 and P3 also supported this in relation to a lack of understanding the unique need of gang affiliated reentry individuals: “you talk to someone but they don’t always seem like they know how to help” and “Sometimes someone wants to help but they aren’t always cool, don’t really understand.” P4 reported, “I don’t think there is very much help out there in the system for inmates in that type of area [related to gang member reentry]. They got the normal stuff, education but I think that is just because they have to have that in there other than that they don’t go out of their way to help you.” P5 described similar experiences: “You face a lot of barriers, there isn’t a lot of support available for us [referring to gang members]. Often we don’t qualify for supportive services in one way or another.” P4 also reported a lack of support from probation officers based upon their bias towards gang members: “Sometimes that’s not the case and you get a parole officer that won’t help and won’t do nothing just send you on your way.”

Subtheme 1.3: Differential treatment based on gang identity. The subtheme of discrimination based upon appearing to be a gang member was also present in all five of

the participant interviews. P1, P2, P3, and P4 all described discrimination as a risk factor for further justice system involvement. P1 described being labeled and treated as a gang member in the community or origin. P1 stated, "The people know you, the police know you so you can't go to the grocery store without being noticed." P3 reported similar experiences of being treated unfairly based on looking like a gang member, "like police look at you funny like you're guilty, your PO, the courts everyone just thinks they know you based on who they think you are." P2 described experiences of discrimination from social systems related to appearing to look like a gang member: "But people look at you and don't want to give a n*gga like me a job... They run background and credit checks to disqualify people like us." P4 explained how their appearance impacted their interactions with support agencies:

"Honestly, if I didn't look like a gang banger I probably would've gotten a lot more help... People would look at my record, my crime itself ... and they would deny me housing, deny me everything...I was getting denied housing, all the stuff to get out of prison and make a better life for myself and my kids."

P1, P3, P4, and P5 described discrimination on a more personal level. As P1 expressed how their appearance resulted in others viewing them a certain way. P1 stated, "No one thinks I'm in college they always look so surprised when I tell them." P3 and P4 described feeling discriminated against based on their appearing to look like a gang member: "People underestimate me, look at me a type of way, only see that part of me, treat me differently" and "I don't understand how much more it will take for me to show people who I am, it shouldn't be my appearance, the way I look is nothing to do with who

I am.” P5 stated, “Once people think they know how you are they treat you a certain way, based upon their beliefs of who you are and not you as a person.”

Theme 2: Influence of Gang identity on Reentry Location

Another theme present in all interviews was the impact that their gang identity had on their reentry into locations where this gang identity was already known. The gang identity was reported to dampen desire for change based upon the gang culture influence. When a gang member reentered into an environment where they were previously labeled as a gang member it significantly increased chances of recidivism. This was based upon the label following them in their interactions with that community and having to respond to others acting like they were gang affiliated with the role of being a gang member. The subthemes identified were: relocation, avoiding gang influence, and feelings of pressure and loyalty to the gang preventing positive change.

Subtheme 2.1: Relocation. The theme of location came up in all five of the participants interviews. Some participants discussed how their gang identity required them to relocate in order to establish a new identity and avoid gang influence, while others described struggles with returning into an environment where there is gang activity where they were already identified as a gang member. P1, P4, and P5 described the need to relocate for positive changes. P1 described how their gang-identity was so strong that they needed to relocate to be able to successfully remove themselves from the gang. P1 stated, “Moving... without that move I don’t think I would’ve been successful.” P4 described the need for gang affiliated individuals to have support in relocation: “if they really want people to get out of the system, out of that gang environment they need to get

them out of the places they live in, how about buying them a plane ticket somewhere else.” P5 also needed to relocate in order to avoid gang influence based upon their prior established gang identity: “I couldn’t stay in the old neighborhood if I wanted to change.”

P2 and P3 more described the impact that their location had on their continued gang involvement. P4 described the difficulty in changing if you reenter into the same location where you were engaging in the gang lifestyle:

“that is what they are gonna need to do, relocate. You can’t be in a gang and say I’m out and stay in the same city, it just don’t work that way. You got tats or people that know you then you’re in [regarding gang membership appearance].”

P2 also described environmental issues with their reentry location based upon their gang-identity; “I couldn’t always stay there, the hood wasn’t right... f*cking Mexicans they won’t leave me alone, like walking from the car to my crib and they all staring like they want to jump me.” Meanwhile P3 also referred to their gang identity preventing them from leaving a gang while staying in the same location: “It’s not like I can just leave, I have my people and loyalties.”

Subtheme 2.2: Avoiding gang influence. The subtheme of avoiding gang influence in order to make and maintain positive changes upon reentry was discussed in three participants’ interviews. P5 described the need to avoid their old gang members to not succumb to temptations: “People still know me, I can still go into the old neighborhoods but choose not to. It’s better for me that way.” P4 had a similar statement related to needing to avoid areas where their gang identity may have meaning: “I stay out the way what is the point of going out there and doing things I don’t need to do, I don’t

want to end up in the system with the same bums I'm trying to avoid." P1 described the need for gang-members reentering into society to avoid the negative influence of gangs: "you can't be around negative people and expect to change [describing other gang members impact on engaging in criminal behavior]."

Subtheme 2.3: Feelings of pressure and loyalty to the gang preventing positive change. A total of four participants discussed deviant behavior as part of showing loyalty and commitment to their gang identities (when active as gang members) as barriers to reentry. P1 described their experiences of being in a gang and how it increased chances of recidivism: "I was in and out of jail when I was younger, running a gang, everyone knew me." P4 described deviant behavior as part of the gang lifestyle. According to P4 criminal behavior was an unavoidable part of gang membership, which impacted reentry experiences: "running the streets doing stuff I don't need to do. That is the main issue when you are out in the streets and need to be a part of the streets, that's when you become the streets." P2 and P3 both described their loyalties to their gangs and the deviant behaviors that go along with them as unavoidable norms to the lifestyle. "I have my n*ggas and we got our shit to do" and "There are people who have my back, but I sometimes wonder if they want what's best for me." P4 also described the strong impact being in a gang had on deviant behavior and increased chance of criminal behavior with reentry: "Well during the time that I was gang banging and stuff like that yeah it made me want to bang more." P1 described gang membership as not being a good influence on the individual: "the gangs don't want what is best for you but for themselves."

Peer pressure was described in four of the participants interviews, in which gang membership serves as an influencing factor for the members' criminal behavior. P1 stated, "It shaped my attitude when I was a boy, like no one could tell me nothing I thought I knew it," while P3 stated, "There are always people telling me different things in my ear." P3 also addressed that gang pressure in relation to making positive changes: "It is hard when there are people in your life pulling you in other ways and test your loyalties." As did P4, "Your boys could always say to come back here, come kick it, come do this." P5 added to this when they stated: "Being a part of a gang they expect certain things from you, there is direct and indirect pressure to continue down that path. If you have family in the gang that pressure starts at a young age."

Theme 3: Appreciation of Support Received Despite Gang-Affiliation

Four out of the five participants described feelings of gratitude in relation to help, even noting that some positive supports were able to overlook the gang identity and see them as individuals with unique strengths. They described these positive supports as major reentry supports despite their gang-affiliation. The subthemes were: unconditional support and positive agency interactions.

Subtheme 3.1: Unconditional support. P4 received family support in finding place to stay and receiving support despite their gang membership:

"Like I said support, when you have help and you're about to reach the end and start doing stuff you aren't supposed to do and someone reaches out a hand you are going to reach out and grab it regardless... reach out to my family members so that I had a place to go."

P1 discussed the need for positive supports in relation to leaving gang membership behind: “you need supportive people around you.” P5 also reported, “If you have supportive people in your life, for me I had support from a cousin, it is easier to make those kinds of changes [describing leaving gang membership and criminal behavior behind].” P4 adds to the family support subtheme in overcoming influence of gang membership on deviant behavior: “So yeah it would have been harder without help from my aunt and my uncle... weren’t gang bangers they weren’t having me out in the streets selling drugs, nothing like that.”

Subtheme 3.2: Positive agency interactions. P1 and P4 focused on an agency as a whole. P1 stated:

“I got connected with [agency]... They had a great program that I was able to get into and without them it would’ve been harder...also gave me a job...they had a program in [location] and that helped me to get out of the old area with a place to stay.”

P4 stated, “I think the parole officers’ sort of already know that their job is to be stern and hard on us but also to be encouraging of our needs [referring to gang member needs].”

Meanwhile P2 described a person within an agency who helped them when others did not based upon their gang affiliation: “this one worker was cool they helped.”

Summary

In conclusion, the purpose of the study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated individuals and to answer the following research question: How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals’ interactions with reentry organizations?

The sample consisted of five participants, all adults of ethnic minorities, who were currently or previously gang affiliated, had been incarcerated multiple times, and spent at least a consecutive year behind bars. The data analysis resulted in identified 3 themes and 8 subthemes. The major themes were: negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang identity, influence of gang identity on reentry location, and appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation. Following this will be Chapter 5, in which I will discuss the results further. This includes interpreting the results, the strengths and limitations of the current study, implications for social change, recommendations, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. Recidivism occurs in approximately two thirds of reentry individuals (National Institute of Justice, 2014), with gang affiliation increasing that rate by 6% (Dooley et al., 2014). There is a gap in the literature in relation to how having a gang affiliation impacts reentry experiences. In this study, I used an IPA approach to explore the reentry experiences of five participants to gain an understanding of their experiences with reentry organizations. I conducted semistructured interviews with the participants to answer the following research question: How does a gang affiliated identity shape reentry individuals' interactions with reentry organizations?

The results yielded three themes: negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang identity, influence of gang identity on reentry location, and appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation. Eight subthemes developed from those themes: stigma of a gang identity, lack of agency support, differential treatment based on gang identity, relocation, avoiding gang influence, feelings of pressure and loyalty to the gang preventing positive change, unconditional support, and positive agency interactions. In the following chapter I will begin to interpret and apply the results toward future research and positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this study, I identified three main themes in relation to how a gang identity impacts interactions with reentry service providers. In the following subsections, these

themes will be further explored in relation to the literature to discuss the meanings that may be interpreted from the results. These themes begin to fill the gap in the literature concerning how gang membership impacts reentry.

Negative Experiences in Relation to Interactions with Others Based on Gang Identity

Researchers have often been reported that reentry individuals experience discrimination based upon their appearance or criminal history (Bender et al., 2016; Goldman et al., 2014; Tyler & Brockermann, 2017). The findings of this study concurred with this as all participants reported having negative interactions based upon their appearance or circumstances. Participants described these negative interactions with others resulting from the identity of a reentry individual or a minority in general. However, they also reported times when they felt the judgment stemmed directly from their gang affiliation. Stigma and discrimination are often reported by reentry individuals; however, there is not much focus in the literature on how a gang affiliation adds to these negative interactions with others.

The findings of this study add to the literature by exploring how the gang identity of the participants impacts these interactions. One participant described difficulty staying in a neighborhood where community agencies had already labeled them a gang member and treated them in a manner that they felt was unfair. Other participants described how they felt their appearance, specifically related to appearing to look like a gang member, impacted their ability to obtain employment. This stigma in relation to a gang identity was experienced on several levels of interaction in their communities (Tyler &

Brockermann, 2017). Participants described having agencies who help provide supports in regard to meeting basic needs, as treating them differently and not understanding their needs. However, they also reported experiencing these stigmatic interactions based on others' responses to their gang identity. Bender et al. (2016) stated that stigma is often experienced by reentry individuals. The results of this study indicated that having a gang affiliation may result in higher levels of negative interactions with others than the average reentry individual.

Influence of Gang Identity on Reentry Location

Association with antisocial peer groups can increase risk of reoffending (Chalas & Grekul, 2017). The findings in this study suggest that having a gang affiliation can increase reentry individuals' interactions with deviant peers. Participants reported that being involved with a gang placed pressure on them to return to previous lifestyles choices, such as engaging in criminal behavior, and there was a focus on a need to avoid these influences to facilitate positive change. This result built upon the findings in other studies in relation to why individuals join gangs and the pressure dynamic that gangs utilize to keep members active (see Chalas & Grekul, 2017). In this study, I found that the influence of gang membership on reentry, specifically as it impacted positive and negative supports, was a major factor in the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals. Gang influence was a risk for reoffending due to the pressures of engaging in certain behaviors that are expected from that population.

An important theme that does not appear much in literature regarding gang affiliated reentry individuals is the impact that the location has on recidivism.

Researchers have found that gang membership increases risk of recidivism by 6% (Dooley et al., 2014). However, the reasons for why are unknown. Environmental factors, such as reentering into a community with high gang involvement and crime rates, have also been found to increase risk of recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2017). Participants described being in a neighborhood where they were already labeled and identified as a gang member by justice system affiliates as well as other gang members as barriers to successful reentry. Being labeled as a gang member placed these participants under increased scrutiny from agencies such as law enforcement and probation and/or parole officers. This increased level of monitoring is likely to increase chances of recidivism. Their gang identity also impacts how other gang members, from their own gang and rival gangs, interacted with participants. For example, participants were impacted in relation to where they were able to stay based upon this identity.

Several participants also reported that relocation was a helpful step in successful reentry in relation to no longer engaging with deviant peers and behaviors. This was due to helping to avoid any pressures that may be put in place by the gang but also to avoid the above-mentioned issues in relation to trying to make positive changes in an environment where others are interacting with you based upon their identity. While several participants discussed how they were able to relocate and how this helped them, it was also viewed as a way for the population to be successful. One participant even suggested that reentry services focus on relocation to have higher success rates and reducing recidivism.

Appreciation of Support Received Despite Gang Affiliation

Researchers have suggested that interacting with prosocial supports can reduce chances of recidivism (Berg & Cobbina, 2017). The findings of this study supported this suggestion in that having positive supports, such as family or agency support, was reported to be helpful in facilitating positive changes. Participants described needing and benefiting from positive supports who were able to treat them respectfully and to see them on a broader scale and as more than just a gang member.

For the participants, positive supports were stepping stones to meeting their basic needs. Researchers have found that a major aspect of positive reintegration into society is having basic needs met (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). These supports helped participants with needs such as employment and housing. Due to the increased barriers that gang members face in relation to meeting these needs, their need for support is evident. It is also likely that being treated in a positive manner, when so many other interactions were negative, may help to begin to facilitate positive change (Hlavaka et al., 2015). For example, while some agencies were seen as unhelpful or interacting negatively, there appeared to be some positive individuals within those systems. Additionally, agencies that directly targeted the gang affiliated population were seen as positive supports by participants. It is likely that these agencies are more equipped to work with this population.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the way that a person's multiple identities interact to create a person's experience with oppression (Moradi, 2017). Each participant came into the study with different identities that impacted and shaped their experiences. Some of

these identities were also ascribed to them based upon their appearance, such as gender, race, age, and gang affiliation. The participants were all ethnic minorities; therefore, this identity intersected with gang identity in terms of their experiences. Participants reported being treated unfairly and having difficulty accessing services based upon the intersectionality of their gang affiliation with their other identities (i.e., gender and ethnicity). These findings support those of Wesely and Miller (2018) who reported that the intersection of different identities impacts individuals' interactions within the justice system. The results also support including gang affiliation as an identity label that interacts with other identities and results in experiences of stigma and discrimination.

Being labeled as a gang member appeared to increase the participants' number of negative interactions with others and increase barriers to receiving supportive services. Based upon an intersectionality framework, having a gang affiliation places a person even lower in their social location than the same individual without the gang identity. This is because intersectionality views how different stigmatic identities interact to shape the person's overall identity and the social location of oppression that goes along with it (Moradi, 2017). Adding an extra stigmatic identity that will interact with other identities shaped the participants' experiences with others. This is also something that can continue once the person no longer identifies as a gang member. If they continue to be labeled as a gang member by society due to their appearance reflecting society's idea of how a gang member looks, they continue to experience the negative interactions and differential treatment (Datachi et al. 2016). Participants expressed anger when they described this differential treatment. This can impact how these individuals interact with others in

relation to these negative interactions, such as acting hostile toward the workers or being difficult to engage with. This behavior adds to the preconceived negative bias that providers may have, reinforcing the stereotype of ethnic minorities and gang members, which is then applied to others with a similar appearance (Grossi, 2017; Harris, 2017). The gang identity then intersects with the other identities, resulting in higher levels of discrimination. A mutual feedback cycle of reinforcing stereotyping and discrimination often develops, adding to the low social location of gang affiliated reentry individuals.

A system of mutual negative feedback plays a major role in relation to recidivism as it can impact how social systems, such as the justice system or agencies that help meet basic needs, treat these individuals in a negative manner, which can add to the barriers of successful reentry for these individuals (Datashi et al., 2016). Using intersectionality as a lens through which to view the reentry experiences of these individuals sheds light onto how individuals' identities shape their interaction with others. Their identities create a risk of recidivism by placing them in a certain light by justice system individuals (i.e., law enforcement, courts, probation officers, etc.) where they are at risk of increased scrutiny. Their identities also result in bias and judgment from service providers, creating an additional barrier to resources. Acknowledging and understanding the role of intersecting identities as they relate to reentry services is the first step in facilitating positive social change.

Ecological Systems Theory

The theme of influence of gang identity on reentry location can be viewed through systems theory, which is based upon the belief that the environment influences

individuals on many levels shaping their circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Viewing reentry experiences, starting in the microsystem, or immediate and direct influencing system, allows a view of who provides the most influence on behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Once a person becomes a member of a gang, gang members make up their microsystem. Gang members were found to have a negative impact on prosocial behavior by providing reentry individuals with pressure to engage in deviant behaviors and reinforcing criminal thought patterns (Goldman et al., 2014). This evidence aligns with the findings of this study related to the impact of gang influence on reentry as an inhibitor toward positive change

While gang membership creates an influence for deviance, having positive supports in the environment where the individual reenters, both family and agency, was reportedly an important factor in facilitating positive change in this study. Participants reported that without these positive supports, they may not have been as successful in their reentry. Bronfenbrenner (1977) described the mesosystem as the way in which different smaller systems interact. This can include the impact that participants in the current study had with both positive and negative supports. In relation to the mesosystem, the results suggest that returning to an environment that has high levels of gang involvement, especially when an individual is already labeled as a gang member by the others in that location, influences their reentry experience. Through a systems lens, gang members are influenced by the positive and negative influences such as pressure to engage in criminal behavior from gang members combined with a desire for positive changes from family members. The resources available through other social systems are

also influenced by other available services, such as availability of jobs (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). Participants described difficulty in making positive changes in an environment that reinforces and traps individuals into deviant lifestyle activities. When people reenter into a neighborhood with high crime rates and limited resources, they are quicker to reoffend (Baglivio et al., 2017). This is what Bronfenbrenner (1977) described as the exosystem, the broader neighborhood influence. The data highlighted the impact of the interaction of the larger environment on gang affiliated reentry individuals because they had systematic barriers preventing them from change. Relocation was identified as an avenue to remove themselves from this environment to begin making positive changes.

Limitations to the Study

As with any study, the current study was not without limitations. Qualitative studies tend to not be as generalizable as quantitative studies (Creswell, 2014). This held true for this study. Given the small sample size of five participants this study cannot be generalized other than for that of gang affiliated individuals within a certain area of California. The small sample size was partially due to IPA methodology recommending a small sample sizes, as well as gang members' content-focused communication styles resulting in a quick level of saturation. The participants were reporting similar themes and experiences and may have had challenges with insight into how this made them feel. It is normal for the gang affiliated population to have limited discussion of feelings, guarded communication style, and focus on content in discussion (Goldman et al., 2014). The homogenous sample size assisted the researcher in capturing the lived experiences of the above mentioned population (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

Another limitation to this study was potential sampling bias. There is a possibility that the participants who participated may have had more insight or stronger reactions to reentry experiences that they wanted to share, compared to those who chose not to participate. The individuals who participated may have had other unknown factors that resulted in them choosing to participate in the study, factors that are not present in other gang affiliated individuals. For example, they may have possessed a stronger commitment to positive change than their peers. Additionally, based on the sample, their reentry experiences may be different than participants in different regions, as the resources and overall legal system subculture can be different based upon location.

My own intersectionality and experiences may have had an impact on the study. IPA involves the researcher exploring their own reactions, suspending bias, and attempting to place themselves in the participants own experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). My appearance may have had an influence on participants given that I do not appear to be of similar ethnic groups as the participants. However, during the interviews there appeared to be enough rapport built to overcome this potential barrier. Still it should be noted that a different researcher may have gotten slightly different results based upon their own appearance and experiences.

I utilized a reflective journal and stayed on the track of the semi structured interview to avoid any bias in the data collection and analysis. I was aware of my own bias regarding differential treatment and discrimination for this population and my own empathy in relation to the reentry struggles of this population. However, it is always

possible that the participants may have picked up on this empathy during the interviews, leading them to disclose certain information.

The population in general tends to follow a cultural trend of being guarded, mistrustful of authority figures, and of not speaking much about their deviant behaviors especially in relation to new systems and people (Chalas & Grekul, 2017; Goldman et al., 2014). This overall trait may have reduced the amount of data that I received by compared to someone who may have a more direct or indirect relationship with this specific population. For example, an individual with whom participants are more familiar with may allow for more process-focused content. It also may have been better explored through alternative qualitative methods that does not require as much of a process-based focus in data analysis. A quantitative data collection method may also have allowed for more data as it could have increased access to quantity of participants. However, the information obtained from this research study began to address the current gap in the literature.

Recommendations

One recommendation for future research would to be to follow up on the theme of influence of gang-identity on reentry location, focusing on the relocation aspect that was identified in the current study, in a more focused qualitative study. By further exploring the connection of perceived gang identity, the interactions with agencies, and how it impacts recidivism it will assist to strengthen the academic literature in relation to this and set the stage for positive social change. A stronger foundation in literature justifying the need for interventions and services to consider the impact that reentry location has on

gang affiliated individuals can assist in these agencies making changes to address this need. On a broader scale, it can impact reentry policy by justifying a need to relocate. For example, making it easier to switch probation locations.

Another possibility for future research would be to explore if there were differences in experiences between male and female gang members. While the current study had male and female participants, it did not look at any differences between genders. However, research suggest that the experiences of female gang members are different than those of male gang members (Peterson & Panfil, 2017), therefore, it may also be the same for reentry experiences.

One way to potentially strengthen future research would be to have several different researchers who are of a similar culture and background to the participants conduct further research. This may add to the current study's findings as it could create a different automatic response in the participants', increase the participants' responses, and have researchers with different lived experiences interpreting the data. It would also expand on the current study by adding more depth to the understanding of the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals.

A quantitative study could add to these findings by looking to see if these themes are present on a larger scale. It would also allow for a more randomized sampling of participants to ensure that the results can be generalized. The sample could also be taken from a broader population that could reduce the impact of regional culture impacting the results. This type of study could then provide a statistical analysis of the findings which

could build on the findings of this study. It would also provide increased reliability and validity to the findings, as those are strong traits in a quantitative study (Creswell, 2014).

Expanding the population of interest and conducting a study that explores how reentry service providers view, respond, and interact with an individual once they know that person is gang affiliated may also shed insight into how having a gang affiliation impacts reentry services as it can provide insight into what bias are in place by those who are working with this population. Additionally, exploring factors that impact agencies to be viewed supportive or nonsupportive could be a follow up study. Increased understanding of these factors could assist service providers in trainings or modifications to be of greater assistance to the gang affiliated reentry population.

Implications

The results of this study have several implications for positive social change. One major implication for social change is the need to reduce negative interactions with gang affiliated individuals with reentry services. The theme negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang identity highlights the overall negative experiences with service providers. This is something that can be utilized to help improve reentry services. It highlights the need to focus on increasing positive interactions. Especially because the other theme appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation indicates that the participants want to receive support. Steps need to be taken to improve reentry services. Service providers need to be aware of their own responses and bias to these individuals and to be sure they are treating them fairly. By increasing their awareness of the subculture of this group and getting to know them as individuals with a

myriad of identities it can reduce bias from service providers. This can include increased trainings on this groups culture and on strengths-based models to focus on the individuals' positive identities. Allowing service providers to hear more stories of gang affiliated individuals can assist in reducing bias by providing context for the behaviors and assisting in developing a level of understanding that can lead to fair treatment. If there are decreased incidents of stigma and discrimination from service providers gang affiliated reentry individuals will be easier to engage and a greater chance of benefitting from reentry services.

The findings suggest that gang affiliated reentry individuals are able to benefit from services when they are presented in a positive and respectful manner. Additionally, having a prosocial support system is appreciated in relation to facilitating positive change. The theme appreciation of support received despite gang affiliation indicates that gang affiliated reentry individuals need positive supports to successfully reenter into society. Therefore, reentry service providers should be aware of the impact that supportive family can have and attempt to engage as many prosocial supports as possible. This finding also suggest that mentorship programs that employ prior gang members can be successful as they can create a positive relationship that encourages and facilitates positive change. Mentors can be aware of the unique struggles faced by gang affiliated reentry individuals.

The findings also highlight the major impact that having gang membership has on issues related to recidivism such as pressure to engage in deviant behaviors and reinforcing criminal thought patterns. Service providers can use this to begin to develop

interventions that address on these unique risk factors. Bergen-Cico (2014) described gang membership as an addiction. This study furthers that focus, as participants describe needing to avoid gang influence to successfully make positive changes in the theme influence of gang-identity on reentry location. Reentry service providers need to be aware of the strong influence gang membership has on reentry experiences and develop interventions that address these factors. Viewing gang membership as an additional barrier that can inhibit positive change and a factor that may be outside of the individuals' control by the time they are ready for positive change. Gang membership needs to be considered when providing treatment, with a focus on addressing the pressures to reoffend that are placed on these individuals.

It also can help provide a context for reoffending that can facilitate understanding. By looking at all the pressures that are placed on gang affiliated reentry individuals and how the gang membership may place them in a position to have limited options, it can foster an understanding of why these individuals may make the choices that they do. If the justice system views these as struggles for this population it can shape how they interact with these individuals. There is even the possibility to create a type of alternative sentencing program for this population. If gang membership is viewed as a reentry barrier, as substance abuse and mental health often are, the justice system can begin to see these individuals in a different light and make policy changes to handle their behavior differently in the justice system.

The theme influence of gang-identity on reentry location also indicates that the environment plays a major role into successful reentry. The findings suggest the need to

consider the physical location of services and referrals to other service providers in either helping the individual in successful reentry or being in an environment that has systematic barriers to change. For example, halfway houses need to be located in an area that is not majorly identified as a certain gang territory so that individuals are able to safely reenter into society into these places. Same with probation offices and other reentry service providers. They need to take steps to ensure that they are located in places that can be safely accessed by all gang affiliated reentry individuals.

The findings also highlight the need to be sure to address the location of reentry individuals who are ready to change. The findings suggest that to successfully reenter gang affiliated individuals need to have access to an environment that does not label them as affiliated with a certain gang. This includes both other gang members and justice system affiliates. This indicates a need for reentry services to focus on relocation as a successful way to reduce recidivism. Service providers can focus on finding ways to assist these people in finding safe locations to begin to facilitate positive changes. This can include alternative sentencing programs in different areas as well as ensuring that when individuals who have been incarcerated are released, that they are able to reside in an environment that can be supportive of their positive changes.

Summary

The findings added to the current literature regarding gang affiliated reentry individuals. It expanded upon themes for reentry by adding the voices of gang affiliated reentry individuals to the current narrative. The themes identified in the study were: negative experiences in relation to interactions with others based on gang-identity,

influence of gang-identity on reentry location and appreciation of support received despite gang-affiliation. These themes can help guide future research to further explore the impact of these factors on reentry and for a quantitative study to increase the generalizability of the findings. This information can help service providers to better understand the reentry experiences of gang affiliated reentry individuals and how this identity impacts access to supportive reentry services. Understanding can help to develop interventions that target this population and meet their unique dynamic needs to hopefully reduce recidivism.

References

- Abate, A., & Venta, A. (2018). Perceptions of the legal system and recidivism: Investigating the mediating role of perceptions of chances for success in juvenile offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *45*(4), 541–560.
doi:10.1177/0093854817753264
- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, *5*(2), 9–19. doi:10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9
- Amani, B., Milburn, N. G., Lopez, S., Young-Brinn, A., Castro, L., Lee, A., & Bath, E. (2018). Families and the juvenile justice system: Considerations for family-based interventions. *Family & Community Health*, *41*(1), 55–63.
doi:10.1097/FCH.0000000000000172
- American Psychological Association. (2016). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>
- Baglivio, M., & Jackowski, K. (2015). Evaluating the effectiveness of a victim impact intervention through the examination of changes in dynamic risk scores. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, *26*(1), 7–28. doi:10.1177/0887403413489706
- Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Jackowski, K., & Greenwald, M. A. (2017). A multilevel examination of risk/need change scores, community context, and successful reentry of committed juvenile offenders. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *15*(1), 38–61. doi:10.1177/1541204015596052

- Bender, K. A., Cobbina, J. E., & McGarrell, E. F. (2016). Reentry programming for high-risk offenders: Insights from participants. *International Journal of Offender Therapy And Comparative Criminology*, *60*(13), 1479-1508.
doi:10.1177/0306624X15578204
- Berg, M. T., & Cobbina, J. E. (2017). Cognitive transformation, social ecological settings, and the reentry outcomes of women offenders. *Crime & Delinquency*, *63*(12), 1522-1546. doi:10.1177/0011128716660521
- Bergen-Cico, D. K., Haygood-El, A., Jennings-Bey, T. N., & Lane, S. D. (2014). Street addiction: A proposed theoretical model for understanding the draw of street life and gang activity. *Addiction Research & Theory*, *22*(1), 15–26.
doi:10.3109/16066359.2012.759942
- Bohmert, M. N., & DeMaris, A. (2018). Cumulative disadvantage and the role of transportation in community supervision. *Crime & Delinquency*, *64*(8), 1033–1056. doi:10.1177/0011128716686344
- Bouchard, J., & Wong, J. S. (2018). The new panopticon? Examining the effect of home confinement on criminal recidivism. *Victims & Offenders*, *13*(5), 589–608.
doi:10.1080/15564886.2017.1392387
- Boxer, P., Docherty, M., Ostermann, M., Kubik, J., & Veysey, B. (2017). Effectiveness of multisystemic therapy for gang-involved youth offenders: One year follow-up analysis of recidivism outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *73*, 107-112. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.12.008

- Breetzke, G., & Polaschek, D. (2018). Moving home: Examining the independent effects of individual- and neighborhood-level residential mobility on recidivism in high-risk parolees. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(10), 2982–3005. doi:10.1177/0306624X17735985
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513–531. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513
- Burns, M. K., Warmbold-Brann, K., & Zaslofsky, A. F. (2015). Ecological systems theory in *School Psychology Review*. *School Psychology Review*, 44(3), 249-261. doi:10.17105/spr-15-0092.1
- Caudill, J. W. (2010). Back on the swagger institutional release and recidivism timing among gang affiliates. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 8(1), 58–70. doi:10.1177/1541204009339872
- Chalas, D. M., & Grekul, J. (2017). I've had enough: Exploring gang life from the perspective of (ex) members in Alberta. *Prison Journal*, 97(3), 364-386. doi:10.1177/0032885517705312
- Cook, P. J., Kang, S., Braga, A. A., Ludwig, J., & O'Brien, M. E. (2015). An experimental evaluation of a comprehensive employment-oriented prisoner re-entry program. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(3), 355–382. doi:10.1007/s10940-014-9242-5

- Craig, J. M., Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Piquero, A. R., & Epps, N. (2017). Do social bonds buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences on reoffending? *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *15*(1), 3–20. doi:10.1177/1541204016630033
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Datchi, C. C., Barretti, L. M., & Thompson, C. M. (2016). Family services in adult detention centers: Systemic principles for prisoner reentry. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, *5*(2), 89–104. doi:10.1037/cfp0000057
- DeHart, D., Shapiro, C., & Clone, S. (2018). “The pill line is longer than the chow line”: The impact of incarceration on prisoners and their families. *Prison Journal*, *98*(2), 188–212. doi:10.1177/0032885517753159
- DeVall, K. E., Lanier, C., Hartmann, D. J., Williamson, S. H., & Askew, L. N. (2017). Intensive supervision programs and recidivism: How Michigan successfully targets high-risk offenders. *The Prison Journal*, *97*(5), 585–608. doi:10.1177/0032885517728876
- Dooley, B. D., Seals, A., & Skarbek, D. (2014). The effect of prison gang membership on recidivism. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *3*, 267. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2014.01.002
- Drake, E. K. (2018). The monetary benefits and costs of community supervision. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *34*(1), 47–68. doi:10.1177/1043986217750425

- Duwe, G., & Johnson, B. R. (2016). The effects of prison visits from community volunteers on offender recidivism. *Prison Journal, 96*(2), 279–303. doi:10.1177/0032885515618468
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2011). *2011 National Gang Threat Assessment – Emerging trends*. Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/2011-national-gang-threat-assessment>
- Folk, J. B., Stuewig, J. B., Blasko, B. L., Caudy, M., Martinez, A. G., Maass, S.,... Tangney, J. P. (2018). Do demographic factors moderate how well criminal thinking predicts recidivism? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 62*(7), 2045–2062. doi:10.1177/0306624X17694405
- Folk, J. B., Mashek, D., Tangney, J., Stuewig, J., & Moore, K. E. (2016). Connectedness to the criminal community and the community at large predicts 1-year post-release outcomes among felony offenders. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 46*(3), 341–355. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2155
- Goldman, L., Giles, H., & Hogg, M. A. (2014). Going to extremes: Social identity and communication processes associated with gang membership. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 17*(6), 813-832. doi:10.1177/1368430214524289
- Grossi, L. M. (2017). Sexual offenders, violent offenders, and community reentry: Challenges and treatment considerations. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 34*, 59–67. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2017.04.005

- Gunnison, E., Helfgott, J. B., & Wilhelm, C. (2015). Correctional practitioners on reentry: A missed perspective. *Journal of Prison Education And Reentry*, 2(1), 32-54. doi:10.15845/jper.v2i1.789
- Harris, K. L. (2017). Re-situating organizational knowledge: Violence, intersectionality and the privilege of partial perspective. *Human Relations*, 70(3), 263–285. doi:10.1177/0018726716654745
- Hawkins, D. (2017). An educational pipeline for inmates. *Journal of College Admission*, 237, 17–18. Retrieved from <https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=125617295&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Henneguelle, A., Monnery, B., & Kensey, A. (2016). Better at home than in prison? The effects of electronic monitoring on recidivism in France. *Journal of Law & Economics*, 59(3), 629–667. Retrieved from <https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=121314747&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Hlavka, H., Wheelock, D., & Jones, R. (2015). Exoffender accounts of successful reentry from prison. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 54(6), 406–428. doi:10.1080/10509674.2015.1057630
- Houser, K., McCord, E. S., & Nicholson, J. (2018). The influence of neighborhood risk factors on parolee recidivism in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Prison Journal*, 98(3), 255–276. doi:10.1177/0032885518764899

- Hsieh, M.-L., Hamilton, Z., & Zgoba, K. M. (2018). Prison experience and reoffending: Exploring the relationship between prison terms, institutional treatment, infractions, and recidivism for sex offenders. *Sexual Abuse-A Journal of Research And Treatment, 30*(5), 556–575. doi:10.1177/1079063216681562
- Kerig, P. K. (2018). Polyvictimization and girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system: Investigating gender-differentiated patterns of risk, recidivism, and resilience. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(5), 789–809. doi:10.1177/0886260517744843
- Kopak, A. M., & Frost, G. A. (2017). Correlates of program success and recidivism among participants in an adult pre-arrest diversion program. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 4*, 727. doi:10.1007/s12103-017-9390-x
- Lee, J. J., Guilamo-Ramos, V., Muñoz-Laboy, M., Lotz, K., & Bornheimer, L. (2016). Mechanisms of familial influence on reentry among formerly incarcerated Latino men. *Social Work, 61*(3), 199-207. doi:10.1093/sw/sww023
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lockwood, S. K., Nally, J. M., & Taiping, H. (2017). Race, education, employment, and recidivism among offenders in the United States: An exploration of complex issues in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences, 12*(2), 57–74. Retrieved from <https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=126901321&site=eds-live&scope=site>

- Martin, G. (2016). Towards an intersectional model of desistance for Black offenders. *Safer Communities, 15*(1), 24-32. doi:10.1108/SC-05-2015-0016
- McNeeley, S. (2018). Do ecological effects on recidivism vary by gender, race, or housing type? *Crime & Delinquency, 64*(6), 782. doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2018.08.004
- Moradi, B. (2017). (Re)focusing intersectionality: From social identities back to systems of oppression and privilege. In K. A. DeBord, A. R. Fischer, K. J. Bieschke, R. M. Perez, K. A. DeBord, A. R. Fischer,... R. M. Perez (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual orientation and gender diversity in counseling and psychotherapy* (pp. 105-127). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/15959-005
- Morash, M., Kashy, D. A., Bohmert, M. N., Cobbina, J. E., & Smith, S. W. (2017). Women at the nexus of correctional and social policies: Implications for recidivism risk. *British Journal of Criminology, 57*(2), 441–462. doi:10.1093/bjc/azv124
- National Institute of Justice. (2014, June 17). *Recidivism*. Retrieved from <https://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism/pages/welcome.aspx>
- Neal, J. W., & Neal, Z. P. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directions for ecological systems theory. *Social Development, 22*(4), 722–737. doi:10.1111/sode.12018
- Ojha, M. U., Pape, C. M., & Burek, M. W. (2018). Reentry in a comparative context: Exploring past, present, and future participation in services between nonurban and urban inmates. *Prison Journal, 98*(2), 163–187. doi:10.1177/0032885517753158
- Owusu-Bempah, A. (2017). Race and policing in historical context: Dehumanization and the policing of Black people in the 21st century. *Theoretical Criminology, 21*(1), 23–34. doi:10.1177/1362480616677493

- Parent, G., Laurier, C., Guay, J., & Fredette, C. (2016). Explaining the frequency and variety of crimes through the interaction of individual and contextual risk factors. *Canadian Journal of Criminology And Criminal Justice*, 58(4), 465-501. doi:10.3138/cjccj.2015E11
- Patten, R., La Rue, E., Caudill, J. W., Thomas, M. O., & Messer, S. (2018). Come and knock on our door: Offenders' perspectives on home visits through ecological theory. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 62(3), 717. doi:10.1177/0306624X16653741
- Peterson, D., & Panfil, V. R. (2017). Toward a multiracial feminist framework for understanding females' gang involvement. *Journal of Crime & Justice*, 40(3), 337–357. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2017.1341970
- Pietkiewicz, I. & Smith, J.A. (2012). A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, 18(2), 361-369. doi:10.14691/CPJ.20.1.7
- Polaschek, D. L. L., & Yesberg, J. A. (2018). High-risk violent prisoners' patterns of change on parole on the draor's dynamic risk and protective factors. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 45(3), 340–363. doi:10.1177/0093854817739928
- Ray, B., Grommon, E., Buchanan, V., Brown, B., & Watson, D. P. (2017). Access to recovery and recidivism among former prison inmates. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 61(8), 874. doi:10.1177/0306624X15606688

- Ritzer, G. (2004). Social Problems: Comparative international perspective. In *Handbook of social problems: A comparative international perspective* (pp. 3–13). doi: 10.4135/9781412973526
- Rossner, M., & Bruce, J. (2016). Community participation in restorative justice: Rituals, reintegration, and quasi-professionalization. *Victims & Offenders, 11*(1), 107-125. doi:10.1080/15564886.2015.1125980
- Savas, G. (2014). Understanding critical race theory as a framework in higher educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 35*(4), 506–522. doi:10.1080/01425692.2013.777211
- Schaefer, L. (2016). On the reinforcing nature of crime and punishment: An exploration of inmates' self-reported likelihood of reoffending. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 55*(3), 168. doi:10.1080/10509674.2016.1148091
- Scurich, N., & Monahan, J. (2016). Evidence-based sentencing: Public openness and opposition to using gender, age, and race as risk factors for recidivism. *Law and Human Behavior, 40*(1), 36–41. doi:10.1037/lhb0000161
- Seabrook, R., & Wyatt-Nichol, H. (2016). The ugly side of America: Institutional oppression and race. *Journal of Public Management & Social Policy, 23*(1), 20. Retrieved from <https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edo&AN=116416213&site=eds-live&scope=site>

- Shapiro, C. J., & DeHart, D. (2017). Understanding families impacted by incarceration: Use of a unique data source. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 98(2), 97–101. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.2017.98.14
- Sharlein, J. (2016). Beyond recidivism: Investigating comparative educational and employment outcomes for adolescents in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(1), 26–52. doi:10.1177/00111287166678193
- Spooner, K., Pyrooz, D. C., Webb, V. J., & Fox, K. A. (2017). Recidivism among juveniles in a multi-component gang reentry program: Findings from a program evaluation in Harris County, Texas. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 13(2), 275–285. doi:10.1007/s11292-017-9288-0
- Steffensmeier, D., Painter-Davis, N., & Ulmer, J. (2017). Intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, and age on criminal punishment. *Sociological Perspectives*, 60(4), 810-833. doi:10.1177/0731121416679371
- Steinmetz, K. F., & Henderson, H. (2016). Inequality on probation: An examination of differential probation outcomes. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 14(1), 1–20. doi:10.1080/15377938.2015.1030527
- Storey, L. (2007). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis. In E. Lyons & A. Coyle (Eds.), *Analysing qualitative data in psychology* (pp. 51-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781446207536.d11
- Tarpey, E., & Friend, H. (2016). A place to call home: Perspectives on offender community reintegration. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 18(4), 283-291. doi:10.1108/JFP-06-2016-0027

- Tyler, E. T., & Brockmann, B. (2017). Returning home: Incarceration, reentry, stigma and the perpetuation of racial and socioeconomic health inequity. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 45(4), 545-557. doi:10.1177/1073110517750595
- Upadhyayula, S., Ramaswamy, M., Chalise, P., Daniels, J., & Freudenberg, N. (2017). The association of ethnic pride with health and social outcomes among young black and Latino men after release from jail. *Youth & Society*, 49(8), 1057–1076. doi:10.1177/0044118X15576736
- Valera, P., Brotzman, L., Wilson, W., & Reid, A. (2017). “It’s hard to reenter when you’ve been locked out”: Keys to offender reintegration. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 56(6), 412–431. doi:10.1080/10509674.2017.1339159
- Vigesaa, L. E., Bergseth, K. J., & Richardson Jens, K. (2016). Who participates in reentry programming? An examination of women offenders in a midwestern state. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 55(5), 308–328. doi:10.1080/10509674.2016.1181131
- Visher, C. A., Lattimore, P. K., Barrick, K., & Tueller, S. (2017). Evaluating the long-term effects of prisoner reentry services on recidivism: What types of services matter? *Justice Quarterly*, 34(1), 136–165. doi: 10.1080/07418825.2015.1115539
- Walters, G. D., & Cohen, T. H. (2016). Criminal thought process as a dynamic risk factor: Variable- and person-oriented approaches to recidivism prediction. *Law and Human Behavior*, 40(4), 411–419. doi:10.1037/lhb0000185

- Ward, T., & Fortune, C.-A. (2016). The role of dynamic risk factors in the explanation of offending. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 29*, 79–88.
doi:10.1016/j.avb.2016.06.007
- Weinrath, M., Donatelli, G., & Murchison, M. J. (2016). Mentorship: A missing piece to manage juvenile intensive supervision programs and youth gangs? *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice, 58*(3), 291-321.
doi:10.3138/cjccj.2015.E19
- Wesely, J. K., & Miller, J. M. (2018). Justice system bias perceptions of the dually marginalized: Observations from a sample of women ex-offenders. *Victims & Offenders, 13*(4), 451–470. doi:10.1080/15564886.2017.1362614
- Willison, J. S., & O'Brien, P. (2016). A feminist call for transforming the criminal justice system. *Affilia-Journal of Women and Social Work, 32*(1), 37–49.
doi:10.1177/088610991665808
- Windsong, E. A. (2018). Incorporating intersectionality into research design: an example using qualitative interviews. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 21*(2), 135–147. doi:10.1080/13645579.2016.1268361
- Wolff, K. T., & Baglivio, M. T. (2017). Adverse childhood experiences, negative emotionality, and pathways to juvenile recidivism. *Crime & Delinquency, 63*(12), 1495-1521. doi:10.1177/0011128715627469
- Wolff, K. T., Baglivo, M. T., & Piquero, A. R. (2015). The relationship between adverse childhood experiences and recidivism in a sample of juvenile offenders in

community-based treatment. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 1–33. doi:10.1177/030 6624X15613992

Zortman, J. S., Powers, T., Hiester, M., Klunk, F. R., & Antonio, M. E. (2016).

Evaluating reentry programming in Pennsylvania's Board of Probation & Parole: An assessment of offenders' perceptions and recidivism outcomes. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 55(6), 419-442. doi:10.1080/10509674.2016.1194945

Appendix: Debrief Sheet

Resource and Referrals

If immediate risk of harm to self or others call 911 or go to the nearest emergency

room

1. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention 1-888-333-2377
2. Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
3. Mental Health America 1-800-969-6642
4. Local 2-1-1- for local resources and referrals
5. National Institute of Mental Health 1-866-615-6464
 - a. 1-800-950-NAMI
 - b. Text NAMI to 741741
6. Contact number on the back of your Medi-Cal or insurance card for private referrals
7. Anxiety and Depression Association of America 240-485-1001
8. Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance 1-800-826-3632