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# A LOOK AT JAIL-BASED REENTRY PROGRAMS

by

MINDY WELLER

B.A. University of Central Florida, 2010

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of Sociology  
in the College of Sciences  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the years correctional-based reentry programs have gained the attention of academics and government officials alike. Academic research has focused primarily on programs implemented in prisons and juvenile facilities. Reentry programs operating out of jails have been vastly under represented amongst these studies. This research study works towards closing this gap by examining jail-based reentry programs by observing the influences of age, race, gender, level of offence (misdemeanor/felony), and program completion on recidivism. Findings were measured for both those who participated but did not complete the programs and those who successfully completed the programs. Data from three jail-based reentry programs in Florida were first analyzed using a Chi-square test and then through binary logistic regression. Determining the strength of the relationships between the independent variables facilitated contextualization of the binary logistic regression results. The results of this research are discussed, and additional directions for future jail-based reentry research are presented.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the years correctional reentry programs have gained the attention of academics and government officials alike. With the signing of The Second Chance Act of 2007 (SCA), under the Bush administration, correctional facilities and nonprofit organizations nationwide were provided the opportunity to gain federal government funding to create reentry programs in an effort to reduce criminal recidivism (Braga, Piel, and Hureau 2009; Spjeldnes and Goodkind 2009). The SCA provides federal grant funding to state, local, and tribal correctional and community-based reentry programs for the purposes of facilitating successful reentry of criminal offenders into society and increasing public safety. Such criminogenic risk/needs include, but are not limited to, substance abuse treatment, family and group counseling, transitional housing, employment, education, and mental health treatment (Andrews and Bonta 2003; Hollin 2002). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than seven million people were under some form of correctional supervision (incarceration and/or probation and parole) by years end of 2009 (Glaze 2010). As the literature on reentry programs and criminal recidivism continues to grow, a gap in the research has become apparent.

The majority of available research conducted on reentry and recidivism focuses primarily on programs implemented in prisons and juvenile facilities. Jail-based programs operating within jails and through community-based programs, which work with jails, have been vastly under represented among existing studies. The purpose of this study is to both lessen this existing gap and to determine whether age, race/ethnicity, gender, level of charge



(felony/misdemeanor), and program completion are predictors of the recidivism of program participants. The underlying expectation is that program completion, age, and race/ethnicity will be the most statistically significant predictors of recidivism among program participants. As reentry programs are geared toward rehabilitation it makes sense to believe that individuals who complete these programs will be less likely to reoffend than those who do not complete the programs. Age also plays an important role. Common knowledge within the realm of criminology is that the majority of crimes, especially violent crimes, are committed by individuals whose ages range from adolescence (teenagers) to late 20's (Kerner 2005). With this in mind the independent continuous variable of age should act as a significant predictor of program participant likelihood to reoffend. The Bureau of Justice statistics reported that "6 out of 10 jail inmates were racial or ethnic minorities" (James 2002, p. 2). Blacks and Hispanics comprised the majority of this population (James 2002). From this information, it is hypothesized that race/ethnicity will be predictor variables of recidivism among reentry program participants. Level of charge and gender are believed to also be statistically significant predictors. Gender has played a major role in existing correctional-based literature, but typically in references to family, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and mental illness (Berman 2005; Jung, Spjeldnes and Goodkind 2009; Spjeldnes, and Yamatani 2010). Level of charge (misdemeanor/felony) in reentry literature is typically limited to violent offenders. However, all of these variables are believed to have a relationship to recidivism.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For individuals rejoining society after a period of incarceration, there are many obstacles which can hinder their successful reentry. The following exploration into reentry literature is a mixture of both prison and jail reentry information and research. Employment, addiction, mental and physical health issues, housing, education, and social support networks can influence this population's ability to transition into contributing members of society (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2001; Austen and Hardyman 2004; Freudenburg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, and Richie 2005; Pogorzelski, Wolf, Pan, and Blitz 2005). Programs initiated and funded through the SCA, and other grant programs like the SCA, have their own hurdles to overcome as well, with roughly three decades of laws and legislation geared toward getting tough on crime standing in the way (Pogorzelski et. al. 2005). Currently, state prisons are mandated to provide inmates with physical and mental health services which are mostly adequate and reactive. One could postulate that this is due to a combination of overcrowding and understaffing. Services that are provided include an initial screening process, counseling, and the administering of psychotropic medications when needed. The New Jersey based Pogorzelski et al. (2005) study reported eighty percent of inmates are receiving counseling, sixty percent are receiving psychotropic drugs, and only forty percent are receiving substance abuse treatment inside the state's correctional facilities. Once released these inmates are given referrals for continued treatment services, but only a small fraction of prisons make appointments for follow-up services for inmates post-release. It is important to note that

policies and processes for prison and jail-based offender services, both pre- and post-release vary by state and county. Prisoners with special needs, such as psychotropic medications, may be unable to obtain necessary treatment once released, which can increase the possibility of reoffending. Progorzeski et. al. (2005) concentrated on how offenders inflicted with mental illnesses were affected by restrictions rooted in current public policy which can deny the ex-offender access to a driver's license, the right to vote, employment opportunities, and furthering of the ex-offender's education. Though many prisons have integrated reentry practices to aid in this transition (Mellow, Mukamal, LoBuglio, Solomo, and Osborne 2008), they often fall short outside of the prison gates. Due to their ex-offender status many individuals in need of assistance are denied access to public assistance programs, employment opportunities, and suitable housing (Progorzelski et. al. 2005). Many of these restrictions are based on the type of crime associated with the offender. If the ex-offender is unable to obtain suitable employment, a place to live, or means of transportation, then recidivism is the most likely outcome.

### Desistance and Criminogenics

Ex-offenders need to find a way to conform to the legal social norms set forth by society. Rehabilitation of a criminal then begins with the criminal's willingness and desire to terminate their previous criminal activities and habits. Laub and Sampson (2001) discuss the differences between termination of criminal activities and desistance. In their work termination of criminal activities occurs when the behavior is actually stopped. Desistance is more long term

in that it is the extended length of time before, if ever, the ex-offender reoffends. Reasons and theories as to why an offender ceases criminal activity are speculated to be tied to experiences throughout the life course of the offender. What precisely initiates the process of an offender to relinquish a life of crime for the “straight and narrow” is a multi-tiered combination of personal and environmental factors. Laub and Sampson (2001) state that “The process of desistance operate simultaneously at different levels (individual, situational, and community) and across different contextual environments (family, work, and military)” (p. 49). From this it is apparent that there is more to “going straight” than simply deciding to do so. Pittaro (2008) discusses the importance of environment and outside support an ex-offender requires to make reintegration effective. Outside support can refer to supportive social networks such as family and friends as well as treatment and resource facilities which aid in the meeting of criminogenic needs.

Criminogenic needs and dynamic risk factors are used to predict an offender’s likelihood of recidivating. Addressing offender criminogenic needs means to facilitate change in the offenders life that diminishes their propensity to continue in criminal behavior. Such needs include but are not limited to substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, behavioral counseling (i.e. anger management), housing, employment, education, and the strengthening or rebuilding of familial bonds (Andrews and Bonta 2003; Ward and Stewart 2003). Identifying offenders’ criminogenic risk means to determine the likelihood that they will reoffend.

Offenders with violent or chronic criminal histories are considered to be high risk while less serious criminal activity, such as petty theft or low level drug charges, combined with a short or

nonexistent criminal history are considered to be low risk (Andrews and Bonta 2003).

Criminogenic risk/needs assessment tools are used to gauge offender level of risk and identify individual needs. There are many assessment tools currently being employed nationally by correctional facilities and reentry programs. The Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) is one such tool. COMPAS is fourth generation risk/needs assessment software which links offender history, case management, treatment, and tracks recidivism outcomes (Brennan, Dieterich, and Ehert 2009). Use of COMPAS or, other assessment tools, provides case managers with the necessary information to identify individual risk/needs of the offender and build a personalized reentry plan around the needs of the individual. How an offender adapts to the treatments and plans designed for them speaks to their responsivity. To increase an offenders' responsivity to treatment certain cognitive and behavioral factors must be assessed. Learning styles and motivation are key to increasing the offenders responsivity to treatment (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2011). By focusing on the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) there should be a decrease in recidivism and, as a result, an increase in public safety (Andrews and Bonta 2003; Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2011; Ward and Stewart 2003).

Ex-offenders also face repercussions of social stigma which can hinder employment. Combined with a lack of societal support, this can facilitate recidivism. Few reentry programs are mandatory in prison, and many inmates are released without having to obey any court-ordered correctional supervision connected to probation or parole (Travis 2005). Of course these points depend on the laws and policies set forth by the state and do not apply to all prisons nationally.

Lack of formal social controls is contributed to by determinate sentencing policies which often place no legal obligations on the inmate for any form of continued treatment post-release (Pittaro 2008). This is mainly due to the understanding that once an offender is released they have served their time and are no longer obligated to any formal social controls administered by the courts. It is then up to the ex-offender to willingly terminate criminal tendencies and activities. Placing the bulk of this change solely on the ex-offender's shoulders does not address any underlying criminogenic issues that most likely contributed to their initial criminal acts or the multitude of problems faced upon release.

Some of the criminogenic risk/needs issues are social stigma, restricted access to government assistance, loss of parental rights, coping with mental and physical ailments, and substance addiction. For successful reentry to be possible services are needed that satisfy the needs of the ex-offender (Wheeler and Patterson 2008). Criminogenic risks, needs, and responsivity (RNR) address the various stressors, needs, and individual issues that ex-offenders are confronted with post-release. Risks refer to potential threat by and to the ex-offender. Here threat relates to the probability of the ex-offender returning to criminal activities post-release. Offenders with lengthy criminal histories or who have committed violent crimes are deemed to be high risk; whereas offenders with little to no criminal history and no violent offences are typically classified as low risk. Needs of offenders vary by individual but in many cases are linked to areas of mental illness, substance abuse, chronic homelessness, social support networks, counseling, employment, and education (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2006; Austin and Hardyman 2004). Responsivity is simply how responsive the offender is or will be to

treatment and available aid. The one thing most scholars agree on is that offenders face a myriad of difficulties after release and that special services are needed to alleviate basic criminogenic risk/needs of the individual for them to become contributing members of society. Wheeler and Patterson (2008) advocate the necessity of social programs in the reentry process. These programs and services begin within the correctional facilities and extend into society. Work release programs, substance abuse treatment, and housing assistance, such as half-way houses, were found to have a positive effect on reducing recidivism among individuals who completed the available programs and extended community-based assistance. All of these examples reflect the meeting of the offenders' criminogenic risk/needs. Risk of violating probation/parole or committing a new crime is highest within the first year. The Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR) principles are widely used in inmate assessment and reentry techniques. RNR measures the offender's risk of recidivism, what needs the offender has that must be fulfilled to reduce risk/needs of re-offending, and the methods of intervention used to treat the offender (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2011). Austin and Hardyman (2004) argue that a prisoner's needs are directly connected to their risk. This risk can be the one they pose to the community or their vulnerability to succumbing to previous criminal activities. Ideally, transition from prerelease planning and preparation to community-based social assistance should provide a consistent system of support (Wheeler and Patterson 2008). Social programs which facilitate the transition from incarceration to society are usually community-based reentry programs and offer both hands on and referral services. It is programs such as these that have supplied the data for this study.

## Reform Tactics

Policy makers attempting to increase access to assistance for ex-offenders are met with the compounding challenge of addressing public safety concerns. Utilization of electronic monitoring devices for less serious offenders has been one way for corrections to monitor offenders outside of correctional facilities. According to a study conducted by Gainey, Payne, and O'Toole (2000), offenders under correctional supervision via electronic monitoring and house arrest are less likely to re-offend and have high rates of positive completion. This means that individuals under electronic monitoring are less likely to break conditions of their release. Offenders are carefully screened to decide whether the program is a good fit post-conviction. Typically, this form of punitive sanction is reserved for less serious novice offenders. A key component in the decision-making process of whether or not to utilize electronic monitoring is employment (Gainey et al. 2000). Gainey et al. (2000) argue that a proper balance of incarceration and the utilization of electronic monitoring during the reentry process will yield the best results and reduce overall recidivism. This is all well and good for the less serious offenders but, when it comes to issues of public safety and the public's fear of crime, successful reentry for serious and violent offenders has a heavy burden to bear.

Education has been found to have the least effect on successful reentry (Progorzeski et. al. 2005). However, it is considered a criminogenic risk/need as it facilitates employment.

Educational programs offered in correctional facilities can include Adult Basic Education (ABE), job skills training, and obtaining a General Education Development degree/diploma (GED). Of



the three education programs it is job skills training, typically through work release programs, which has the highest success rate (Cho and Tyler 2010). Offender perceptions of the value of education hinge on age and criminal history. Older offenders with a lengthy criminal background were found to place a higher value on education and were more likely to participate in education programs while incarcerated (Bircher 2010). Transversely, the younger and less experienced offenders found little value in utilizing available education programs while incarcerated. Individuals lacking a high school degree or GED are more likely to fail or drop out of reentry programs (Listwan 2008). Cho and Tyler (2010) found significant increases in employment and earnings amongst the inmate population who completed the ABE program and even higher earning potential for those who continued on to the GED programs. Unfortunately they found no significant effect on recidivism for this population. Inmates who obtained employment after participating in job skills training and work release programs did, however, have lower recidivism rates (Cho and Tyler 2010). The willingness of the offender to change will have little effect without external support (Laub and Sampson 2001). It is also unclear as to the underlying motivations of inmates who opt to participate in such programs. Since participating in prison-based programming can gain the favor of parole boards, it begs the question of whether their intentions are to change or simply to earn points towards an early release (Pittaro 2008).

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is an eight point approach to offender re-entry that combines criminogenic risk/needs with a multi-stepped targeted response. An EBP program is built around the criminogenic risk/needs identified in the offender and matches the offender to

resources best suited to their risk/needs (Guevara and Solomon 2009). Additionally, consistent support and services are provided to the offender throughout the process while simultaneously being tracked by program officials. First, the offenders criminogenic risk/needs are identified with the use of a valid RNR tool by an individual who has been formally trained how to use the assessment tool. Simply providing access to resources that meet the risk/needs of the offender is not enough. The second point of EBP is pairing the offender with an EBP trained case manager who can support and motivate the offender through the transition process. It is at this point that the process to change the behavior of the offender begins. Through the use of motivational interviews the trained case manager or program official is able to help the offender acknowledge their criminal behavior as an ineffective way to obtain what they want and accept legitimate means of goal attainment. The third point of EBP targets offender specific interventions. Once the RNR of the offender is determined a structured routine is developed for the offender to follow. Offender services and supervision are divided up to positively occupy the offenders free time post-release. How this time is divided and the amount of services and supervision assigned to the offender is constructed on a case by case basis based on the offenders RNR results. Treatment offered in this step is best fulfilled when it is sanctioned by the courts as part of the offenders sentence. The fourth point of EBP deals with the training of the staff that will have the most contact with the offender. This can be either through a treatment center or law enforcement personnel assigned to the offenders case. Trained personnel must have an understanding of the factors that influence and incite criminal behavior. Such factors include anti-social thinking, socially acceptable communication,

and the particular aspects of the offenders' social learning background. The trained staff member should then be able to guide the offender away from criminal habits and positively reinforce more socially acceptable behavior. Positive reinforcement of new behavioral changes is the fifth point in EBP. This approach focuses on reward rather than punishment and is often integrated into the beginning of the behavior modification process initiated in point two. Point six in EBP utilizes community support. Successful reintegration of an offender back into society is heavily influenced by the surrounding environment. Practitioners of EBP programs utilize family and pro-social community members to positively reinforce behavior changes post release. Constructive interaction with non-correctional personnel facilitates a smooth reintegration into society and supports newly developed pro-social behavior. Points seven and eight of EBP focus on the consistent and detailed tracking of the offenders progress through the program. These steps provide law enforcement officials with the appropriate data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Maintaining accurate recidivism information of all program participants is essential in the program evaluation process. Consistent and accurate data collection will reflect both employee and offender performance. Equipped with accurate and detailed data the EBP program staff is able to provide pertinent feedback to the offender.

### Reentry Demographics

Race and age are easily measured and often used in reentry research. This is true for both prison studies and the few jail-based studies currently available. So far, it remains consistent that Black men are at a far higher risk for recidivism than White men. This disparity is often

attributed to economic and social strains (Jung, Spjeldnes, and Yamatani 2010). The Jung et al. (2010) study does not address the recidivism of Hispanics. Though it is understood that Hispanics represent an ethnicity rather than a race, they are underrepresented in available research. The lack of Hispanic data is believed to be due to the fact that ethnicity is rarely documented by correctional facilities. This is the case in the Broward County data set utilized in this study. Incorporating Hispanic participation in this analysis addresses the gap in current literature. Even with the exclusion of the Hispanic population, Jung et al. (2010) discovered that amount of time served and age of offender at the time of release had differing outcomes in association to race. Black males who served six months to a year were at an increased risk of recidivism in a shorter time frame than White males. White males serving the same amount of time exhibited a delay in time before recidivism. The offenders' age at time of release yielded similar results with Black men typically being released at younger ages than white men. This is also a reflection of the age at which they were initially incarcerated. Offenders who participate and continue in community-based reentry programs have a higher reintegration rate than those who only participate while still incarcerated (White, Suanders, Fisher, and Mellow 2008). From both the White et al. (2008) and the Braga et al. (2009) studies access to community-level assistance is a factor to successful ex-offender community reintegration.

More than one million women were under correctional supervision, either through incarceration or community supervision, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (Glaze 2009) by the end of 2009. 85% of these women were under community correctional supervision, i.e. probation or parole, while 15 % were incarcerated in state or federal

correctional institutions. 35% of the male correctional population was incarcerated and 65% were under community correctional supervision at year end 2009 (Glaze 2009). Both men and women are subject to similar criminogenic risk/needs as men, i.e. substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty to name a few. However, women are more likely than men to either have suffered from physical and sexual abuse and are or have been the primary care-givers of children prior to arrest (Berman 2005). This does not indicate that men are not abused in these ways or have been responsible for the care of children, only that these characteristics tend to be more female centric. Addressing the criminogenic risk/needs of male and female inmates is referred to as “gender responsive” (Berman 2005, p. 5). This approach identifies the differences in criminogenic risk/needs by gender specific factors. Effective reentry strategies for both men and women should incorporate areas where the risk/need is greatest. Whether the best approach to reduce recidivism and facilitate a smooth transition back into society should include gender responsive tactics or primarily cover risk/needs shared by either gender will require further study.

#### Reentry Program Practices and Examples

There are four strategies outlined in the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) study conducted by Golder et al. (2005) that produce reduced recidivism; incapacitation, educational and job training programs, prison-based therapeutic communities, and non-prison based sex offender treatment. For the purposes of this research only the first three strategies within this study will be expounded upon. First, incapacitation refers to the incarceration of offenders. It is from

this approach that “get tough on crime laws” gained popularity. The ineffectiveness of the incapacitation method was speculated to be due to its focus on harsher and longer mandatory sentencing, i.e., three-strikes laws, that keep offenders away from the community for longer periods of time (Golder et. al. 2005). It is noted that selective incapacitation may better serve reducing crime rates as it places more severe punitive sanctions on repeat and serious offenders. Second is a reoccurring theme throughout the current literature. Concerns about education and employment among the nation’s incarcerated population continue to be a focal point in reentry programs and strategies. Lastly, prison-based therapeutic communities refer to another consistent theme throughout the literature. Here, drug treatment and rehabilitation which begin pre-release are addressed. Golder et al. (2005) discussed the importance of both intensity and duration of program strategies, as well as the inclusion of community-based support, that fulfills the offenders’ risk/needs. Since the time of the Golder et. al. (2005) study many changes have occurred throughout corrections including the signing of the SCA, the incorporation of reentry programs into both prisons and jails, and the widespread use of criminogenic assessment tools. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics incarcerated populations have slowly been declining since 2008 (Glaze 2010). Between 2008 and 2009 the population under all forms of correctional supervision declined by 7%.

An evaluation of incarcerated women and adolescents (under 18 years of age) men reentering society from New York City jails post plea-bargain showed that most had prior arrests and drug involvement histories (Freudenberg et al. 2005). All of the individuals in this study had participated in intervention programs during their incarceration. Though this study does not

include juveniles (under 18 years of age), the findings are important to note. Half of all inmates in the New York based study incarcerated in 2000 returned to jail within the first year of release. Both women and adolescent males reported obtaining the majority of their income through illegal means or through dependence on family and friends. Continued drug use was prevalent in both groups. Only a small percentage of young men continued drug treatment post release. Involvement in post-release drug rehabilitation programs for women and young men appeared to be contingent on the level of health insurance at their disposal. Those without available health insurance were more likely to continue drug use and participate in illegal activities. One of the most noted influential components in reducing recidivism, outside of having health insurance, was employment. Individuals in this study reported lower rates of recidivism and drug use if they found or retained conventional employment post release (Freudenberg, Moseley, Labriola, Daniels, and Murrill 2007). These findings indicate a need for extended assistance for ex-offenders. Logically, if more post-release social assistance were available to ex-offenders, there could be a dramatic reduction in recidivism rates.

In 2003, the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) was implemented in order to provide federal funding to state correctional facilities in order to create and further develop reentry programs geared toward successful community reentry for serious and violent offenders (Listwan 2008). SVORI is similar to the SCA in that it provides funding to develop and create reentry programs for incarcerated offenders. The difference between the two is that SVORI is specialized to address only serious and violent offenders. Whereas, the SCA is a broader initiative available to any correctional or community-based reentry initiative regardless

of focus. Criminogenic risk/needs assessment classifies the population included in SVORI as high risk offenders which are believed to be the most amenable to treatment. Vishner and Lattimore (2007) examined the SVORI program and found that participants identified a need for change in their lives by recognizing areas of their behavior needing improvement. Among the highest reported needs identified by these individuals were education, employment and financial assistance, and a driver's license. Treatment and services available through SVORI was intense pre-release and tended to taper off post-release. No statistically significant changes for reduced recidivism were found between those who did and did not participate in the SVORI program (Lattimore, Steffey, and Vishner 2009). Focal points of the initiative centered on the categories of education, employment, housing, social service assistance, physical and mental health, and substance abuse. Ex-offenders who successfully completed programs while incarcerated and were unable to acquire gainful employment or suitable housing post release were at greater risk of re-offending. Findings of the Listwan (2008) examination of the SVORI program support a more case-based approach to reentry strategies, as there is no one perfect program that will fulfill the needs of all ex-offenders post release.

There are other programs attempting to address the issues of public safety and successful community reintegration of violent and serious offenders. One such program is the jail-based Boston Reentry Initiative (BRI). Focusing its attention on transitioning violent offenders back into the community the BRI has yielded a remarkable 30% drop in violent arrest rates (Braga, Piehl, and Hureau 2009). Only offenders chosen by the Boston Police Department (BPD) are allowed to participate in BRI. Between fifteen to twenty new inmates that are considered by



the BPD to be at the highest risk for violent reoffending are initiated into the program per month. Gang affiliation, extensive violent arrest history, and residence in high crime areas are among the criteria BPD looks for during the vetting process. Through a combination of interagency and community, social and faith-based, services inmates receive personalized case specific support that starts while in jail and continues post release. Each inmate has external social support from an assigned mentor or family member which complements the myriad of programs they are enlisted in while incarcerated. Even transportation between the ex-offenders residence and associated program facility is provided. If an identified BRI offender reoffends, they are then prosecuted to the full extent of the law. It is implied in the Braga et al. (2009) study that a combination of case-specific support and deterrence is utilized to achieve successful reentry for every offender. Evidence-based practices (EBP), such as the BRI, are programs designed to guide decisions that best fit specific problems and populations for the best possible care of the affected individuals (Golder, Ivanoff, Cloud, Besel, Mckiernan, Bratt, and Bledsoe 2005). In essence, it is the science of figuring out what works.

### Jail vs. Prison

One of the most difficult challenges facing jail-based reentry programs is utilizing the short amount of time an inmate stays within the correctional facility as opposed to prisons where inmates serve out extended sentences. Offenders residing in jail typically serve out sentences of less than one year, though this time frame can vary by state. Most offenders in jail are incarcerated for less than one month (Solomon, Osborne, LoBuglio, Mellow, and Mukamal

2008). For this reason many studies of reentry programs that offer rehabilitation, counseling, extended post-release assistance, referral programs, and education are based on data gathered at the prison level where it is easier to conduct research due to the extended incarceration periods of prison inmates. At the jail level it becomes exponentially difficult to address underlying issues of criminality. This is due to the typically short period of incarceration jail inmates experience. Here is where criminogenic assessments become most crucial to the reentry process. With the use of criminogenic assessment tools inmates can be assessed quickly and adequately matched with available programs that best fit their reentry needs. Identifying criminogenic risk/needs is essential to successful reentry (Andrews and Bonta 2003). The strength found in the short sentences is that individuals spend less time away from social support systems such as family, friends, and other branches of the community. With these ties only strained and not broken, the individual is able to maintain bonds that have the potential to facilitate successful reentry. Nevertheless, the bonds that remain intact may also facilitate a continued life of crime. Peer support acts as a doubled-edged sword for post-release individuals. Social support has been documented as having a positive effect on successful reentry (Pittaro 2008), but for individuals reentering environments where peer support encourages continued criminal activity, participation in any reentry program available in correctional facilities can have a diminished effect (Freudenberg et al. 2005). Separation from pro-criminal peers and environments increase successful criminal desistance (Caspi and Moffitt 1995).

Adult offenders make up the primary correctional populations. As they are over the age of eighteen, these inmates have the choice to partake in programs offered within the jails and prisons if participation has not been made mandatory by the court. Such opportunities include ABE and GED classes, substance abuse rehabilitation and counseling, job skills training, and life skills classes. These services do not qualify as reentry programs on their own but are typically integrated into existing reentry programs. Not all jail facilities keep records of recidivism on inmates who do not participate in available reentry programs. For this reason the current study only takes into account available recidivism data on individuals who have participated in one of the three reentry programs used in this study.

## **PARTICIPANT PROGRAM OVERVIEWS**

Each of the three Florida County jail-based reentry programs in this study includes services geared towards rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society. Each of the programs in this study is open to both men and women serving time in county jails. Details about each of the programs are as follows.

### Palm Beach County

Established in 2002, Project Re-building, Empowering, Achieving, Prospering (R.E.A.P.) Success is a reentry program operating out of Palm Beach County Main and West Detention Centers. Only Data from 2005 through 2010 has been used. All data and information was provided by Project R.E.A.P. Success. This is a voluntary program which works with roughly 200 offenders per year and offers services for both pre and post release offenders. Offenders may be referred to the program by jail staff or attorneys that work closely with the jail. Offenders who choose to participate in the pre-release preparation services offered by R.E.A.P. typically notify the R.E.A.P. representative a minimum of four weeks prior to release. Inside the jail, R.E.A.P. works with offenders by providing pre-release services such as obtaining identification, resume and employment referral assistance, and mental health assessment and treatment needs. Participants must sign a commitment agreement to the program stating that they will complete all requirements set forth. Completion of the program typically occurs six months after release. Post-release offenders, then referred to as clients, are provided treatment for substance abuse,

mental illness, and family counseling through referral services. Assessments of client needs are ascertained through face-to-face interviews and a background review. Once the needs of the client are determined a structured reentry plan is built around those needs. Recidivism data is only collected for the first 90 days post release. There are no set criteria for individuals entering the program. No legal recompenses, such as clearing of charges or reduced sentences, are offered or awarded to clients since participation in this program is strictly voluntary. As there are no legal ties between the client and program there are no legal repercussions for failure to complete.

#### Broward County

Data collect between 2007 and 2010 obtained from Broward County is from two reentry programs operating out of the Broward County Sheriff's office Day Reporting and Reentry Division. Information regarding the details of the Broward County reentry programs was obtained through the Day Reporting and Reentry Division of the Broward Sherriff's Office website<sup>1</sup>. Recidivism data is tracked through the jail by re-arrest date. The Day Reporting and Reentry Division (DRRD) in Broward County, Florida, oversee multiple reentry programs. Only two of these programs are included in this study. The first is a non-voluntary program for felons who are court ordered into the DRRD Supervision Program. No specific criteria is set for felons included in this program as it is at the judge's discretion as to whether the offender is a good candidate. Assessment and implementation of a personalized reentry program is initiated

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<sup>1</sup> [http://sheriff.org/about\\_bso/dodcc/court/dayreporting.cfm](http://sheriff.org/about_bso/dodcc/court/dayreporting.cfm).

within the jail for felony offenders. The second program is the Misdemeanor Drug Court Program (MDCP). Clients in the MDCP can voluntarily participate in the program as long as their charges are for misdemeanor drug charges such as possession of marijuana and they have no prior felonies. If they opt out of the program before completion they must return to the judge for sentencing. All participants sign a compliance contract upon entry into either DRRD program. Upon entering either program, participants must also complete the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) risk assessment. COMPAS is an automated risk/needs assessment tool which identifies the criminogenic risk/needs of each client through a computerized self-survey which identifies such risk factors as criminal behavior, delinquency problems, needs and social factors (Brennen, Dieterich, and Ehert 2009). These risk/needs factors are then combined with the considerations of a criminal justice professional after a one on one interview. From here a program is built around the risk/needs of the client. Felony offenders entering the Supervision Program must adhere to any court ordered conditions and fulfill the program requirements which have been determined with the aid of COMPAS. Completion of both programs occurs when the clients fulfill all requirements set forth by the judge and the DRRD program for a minimum of six months. To insure safety to the community an added security measure was assigned each felony offender in the form of an electric ankle monitor.

The MDCP program begins at release. Client activity within the community is monitored through random inspections at the offenders' home or place of work when necessary. Case managers assigned to offenders implement available reentry services into the offenders daily

routines. Among these services are support group meetings, referrals for mental health and substance abuse treatment, life skills classes, anger management, and referrals to community based treatment facilities. MDCP clients must make appointments for and attend substance abuse classes and undergo substance abuse evaluations and treatment if it is required by court order. Classes offered through the DRRD take place at the DRRD offices which are not located at the jail. The Employment Skills Workshop is mandatory for all clients who are unemployed. The Motivational Skills for Living Class and the Relapse Prevention class are offered to clients in both programs but are voluntary to participants of the MDCP. Both groups are subject to random drug tests and must report to both the judge and the DRRD; four times in the first month and then once a month after that. Third party treatment providers also report the progress of the client to the DRRD and the judge. To further facilitate successful reentry into society, the DRRD has a reentry referral guide book which supplies contact information to a number of off-site facilities and services available within the community. Such contact information includes numbers and referral services for counseling, emergency shelters and transitional housing services, faith-based charities, medical assistance, and case management services. Once either program is complete the charges or probation associated with the client are terminated.

### Seminole County

In Seminole County data was obtained from the Healing and Transition (HAT) program.

Established in 2009, HAT is a faith-based organization which primarily operates out of the John

E. Polk Correctional Facility. All data and information obtained for this study were secured through HAT. Information on the process by which the program collects/tracks the necessary data is through forms and surveys filled out by the offender/client and maintained in HAT's database. There are two phases to the HAT program. Participation in Phase 1 of the HAT program can be either voluntary or court ordered and begins within the jail. Inmates located within the J, K, L, and M faith-based dorms of the John E. Polk Seminole County Correction Facility (jail) are offered the option to participate voluntarily. Both phases of HAT are open to men and women.

Phase 1 begins with an orientation class where inmates fill out a small assessment packet. From this packet HAT members are able to identify underlying criminogenic risk/needs issues. Substance abuse, housing, mental health, anger management and social support are just some of the criminogenic needs that are evaluated through the HAT orientation and assessment process. Transition plans are developed with each client based on information gathered from their assessment packet. Pre-release, clients attend weekly classes which address internal issues to facilitate internal growth, healing, and character development.

Phase 2 of the HAT program takes place post-release. Clients in this phase are not required to have participated in Phase 1. Mentorships, which began in Phase 1, are continued in phase 2. Employment, education, group counseling, family development classes, substance abuse relapse prevention and medication services are available to clients in this phase. Completion of the program is attained after the client has participated in the program for one year and



fulfilled all program requirements. HAT is primarily a voluntary program and as such does not offer any legal benefits to clients such as sentence reduction or termination of charges. If participation in the program is in any way court ordered, the program is considered to be completed when court dictated requirements are fulfilled. As stated, completion of the program takes one year. This is for voluntary clients. Court-ordered clients can fulfill requirements for completion in six months post release. In these cases, failure to complete the program is considered a violation of the clients' probation and legal repercussions, i.e., re-incarceration or financial penalties can be enforced.

## **METHODS**

Data for this study is secondary data obtained from the three previously mentioned jail-based reentry programs located in Palm Beach County, Broward County, and Seminole County, Florida after permission to conduct the research was granted by the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB). All identifiable information of program participants, such as name, social security numbers, phone numbers and addresses, have been removed to ensure participants' privacy and protection. Only number of participants, age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of charge, program completion, and recidivism data have been included and represent the variables in the analysis. How each data set was prepared for analysis is discussed below by county.

This study focuses on the recidivism of jail-based reentry program participants. Recidivism is measured by re-arrest in both the Broward County and Seminole County data. Since data on clients from the Palm Beach program is only collected for 90 days post-release and recidivism data is not collected, re-arrest could not be used as the dependent variable. Sample sizes for the data vary by county. The Palm Beach data from 2005 through 2010 consisted of a sample size of 937 cases but only 889 cases were used due to missing data. The data set for Palm Beach County originally contained cases from 2002-2011. For the purposes of this study only data from 2005-2010 was used. The Broward County data set includes data from 2007-2010. The available sample size for Broward County was 1409 cases. Of this, 562 cases were used in this analysis due to 847 cases missing data. Seminole County data spanned from 2009-2012

and was comprised of 726 cases. As a result of missing data 691 cases of the data set were used in this analysis. Descriptive statistics for all three counties are exhibited in Table 1.

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Recidivism Variables**

	Palm Beach County 2005-2010		Broward County 2007-2009		Seminole County 2009-2012	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
<u>Dependent Variables</u>						
Noncompletion (N=397)	.44	.496	--	--	--	--
Completed (N=512)	.56	.496	--	--	--	--
Rearrest (N=348)	--	--	.62	.486	--	--
NoRearrest (N=214)	--	--	.38	.486	--	--
Rearrest (N=240)	--	--	--	--	.35	.476
NoRearrest (N=451)	--	--	--	--	.65	.476
<u>Independent Variables</u>						
Age	33.88	11.004	27.59	8.523	35.04	10.883
Female	.21	.406	.17	.373	.51	.500
Black	.48	.500	.48	.500	.25	.435
Hispanic	.04	.193	--	--	.13	.336
Noncompletion	--	--	.20	.403	.58	1.493
misdemeanor	--	--	.66	.474	.32	.466

Descriptive Statistics: Means and standard deviations of all variables listed by county.

Note: Variables are in proportions to the total N, by county.

### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this analysis is recidivism after participation in a reentry program except for the Palm Beach County data. For the purposes of this study, recidivism is labeled as Rearrest and NoRearrest except in the case of the Palm Beach County data. Since the Palm Beach County program does not consistently collect data on rearrests, the dependent variable will be Noncompletion. Noncompletion refers to the clients' completion status. Non-completion of the Palm Beach reentry program could be due to loss of contact with client, re-arrest, or they simply dropped out of the program. Since re-arrest is a possible outcome for non-completion it becomes the dependent variable for Palm Beach. The Noncompletion variable is used as an independent variable in the Broward County and Seminole County models. Details on the Noncompletion variable are discussed in the Independent Variables section below. These variables are dichotomous as they include both possibilities of re-arrest and no re-arrest; as well as non-completion and completion. Rearrest is compared to NoRearrest in this analysis and is coded as NoRearrest = "0" and Rearrest = "1". In some case reincarceration was attributed to a violation of probation (VOP). Cases in all three data sets with a VOP listing was merged into the Rearrest variable since the majority of VOP listings were accompanied with new charges. Recidivism is measured by program documented re-arrests committed within the time period of each data set.

## Independent Variables

Consistent themes found throughout the available literature have identified variables that can positively or negatively affect an individual's probability of recidivating. Influences include program completion, age, gender, race, and level of offence (misdemeanor/ felony). Also of importance is the program itself and what the program offers to the inmate. All of these characteristics have been linked to successful completion of correctional reentry programs and reintegration into society.

### Program Completion

Program completion is whether or not the offender fulfilled all required goals outlined by the reentry program. Non-completion of the reentry programs is referred to as Noncompletion. This is because only participants of the Broward County Felony Supervision program face punitive consequences for failure to complete all reentry program requirements and all other programs are conducted on a voluntary basis. Participants in the voluntary programs may opt out at any time. This variable is used as an independent variable in the Broward County and Seminole County models of the binary logistic regression. However, as previously stated, since the reentry program in Palm Beach County does not consistently track recidivism for its participants, this variable is being used as the dependent variable for the Palm Beach County model. Program completion has been coded as Noncompletion= "1" and Completed= "0".

### Gender

Both male and females are included in the analysis, even though the number of incarcerated women is small in comparison to men. With the population of female offenders continuing to grow, it would be negligent to not include them. Also, existing literature on reentry is primarily male-centric. Women are typically only included when issues of parenthood and mental illness are factors in the analysis (Spjeldnes and Goodkind 2009). Gender has been coded as female="1" and male="0".

#### Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity is typically broken down into three categories: Black, White, and Hispanic. It is understood that Hispanic is not a race but an ethnicity and as such is to be its own independent variable. Nationally, as of 2010, 15.8% of jail inmates were identified as Hispanic. 44.3% of jail inmates were White, and Black males accounted for 37.8% of inmates of jail inmates (Minton 2011). These statistics only represent local jail populations for 2010. For this study, race/ethnicity has been split into two variables; Black and Hispanic. Black is coded as "1" and white as "0". Hispanic is coded as "1" and all other race/ethnicity variables have been coded as "0". Cases where race and ethnicity were identified as anything other than White, Black or Hispanic equated to such a small sample size that they were coded as "0" and merged into the reference category.

#### Age

Previous literature shows that an offender's age can play a part in their propensity to re-offend post-release (Cho & Tyler 2010; Pittaro 2008; White et. al. 2008). Offenders who are older, i.e.,

late 20's and up, at time of arrest and release have higher successful reintegration rates. This leaves younger offenders, mid-20's and below, at a higher risk for recidivism. Age is a continuous independent variable in the analysis.

#### Level of Charge

An offender's level of charge refers to whether they were incarcerated for a misdemeanor or felony offense at the time of program entry and not in reference to the level of charge associated with re-arrest after program participation. A misdemeanor conviction is viewed as less severe than a felony conviction as it tends to carry a shorter term of incarceration.

Inclusion of this variable is done to determine whether participant recidivism is affected by criminal classification. Since this variable is divided into two groups it is a dichotomous independent variable and will be coded as Misdemeanors = "1" and Felonies = "0".

#### Palm Beach County

The Palm Beach County Project R.E.A.P. Success reentry program provided data from 2002-2010. In an effort to simplify the analysis it was decided to only incorporate data from 2005-2010. Once the data from 2002-2004 had been removed, along with any client identification information it was purged of all case files for clients that did not participate in the reentry program. All client case files that had ineligible, canceled, pending, or hold in the area of program completion were deleted from the data set. This was done because clients under those listings had not been at any time a participant of the R.E.A.P. program. Clients listed as canceled or ineligible were either awaiting trial or had been released through pre-trial release

or bonded out. Age was calculated by year of birth to the time of participation. If a client was born in 1979 and attended the program in 2008 their list age was 29, as this was their age during their time in the program. All other variables utilized from this data set were clearly marked and coded as previously specified.

Frequencies were run for all variables in the analysis. The dependent variable Noncompletion, for this data set, is 43.7% in comparison to the 56.3% who completed the program. Blacks accounted for 48.3% of the data in comparison to Whites and Hispanics. The Hispanic ethnicity only accounted for 3.9% of the data in comparison to Black and White. Females accounted for 20.7% of the data set in comparison to males. For level of offence misdemeanors accounted for 29.6% in comparison to felonies. Age ranged from 18 to 69 years old. A frequency of this variable showed that the highest number of program participants fell between 20 and 23 years of age accounting for 4%-4.7% of the data set. The lowest frequency of program participants resulted in participants over the age of 60, representing .1% of the data set.

### Broward County

Data from both MDCP and the Felony Supervision programs was obtained from the DRRD and merged into one Broward County data set. Merging the two data sets was necessary in order to compare misdemeanor and felony cases. Broward County DRRD data spans the years from 2007-2010. No client identity information was deleted from this set as it was not included in the data package. Frequencies and Chi square tests were run on the independent variables of Noncompletion and Misdemeanor but were removed from the binary logistic regression. This



was done because missing data for both of these variables negated their viability in the analysis. The ethnicity variable of Hispanic is not included in the Broward County model because it was not documented in the data set. All variables were clearly marked and coded as previously stated.

Frequencies were run on all variables in this data set. The dependent variable of Rearrest accounted for 61.9% of this data set in comparison to 38.1% of NoRearrest. This accounts for the recidivism by arrest data collected by the DRRD. Blacks accounted for 48.5% of the data set in comparison to Whites. Female program participants accounted for 16.7% in comparison to males. Age ranged from 18 to 73 years of age. The highest frequency of program participants' age was 22 years old, accounting for 13.4% of the data set. Program participants over the age of 60 accounted for .1%.

### Seminole County

Data obtained for Seminole County was provided by the Healing and Transition (HAT) reentry program and covers the years from 2009-2012. All identifiable client information was removed from this analysis to ensure the protection and privacy of program participants. Data gathered on recidivism was facilitated by the HAT program through the use of publicly available arrest reports. HAT is divided between two phases. The first takes place inside the jail while the second takes place within the community. To avoid confusion both phases were merged into one data set for Seminole County.

Frequencies were run for every variable in the data set. Rearrest accounted for 37.4% of the data in comparison to NoRearrest which represents the dependent variable for this model. Noncompletion accounted for 34.7% of the data in comparison to those who completed the program. Blacks accounted for 21.8% of the cases in comparison to Whites and Hispanics. Hispanics accounted for 12.9% of the data in comparison to Blacks and Whites. Misdemeanors accounted for 31.7% of the data in comparison to felonies. Females accounted for 51.5% of the data in comparison to males. This is the only data set where women outnumber men. Age of program participants ranged from 18-65 years old. The highest frequency of program participants' age was 23 years old, accounting for 4.9% of the data set. Program participants over the age of 60 accounted for a range of .2%- .5%.

It is the purpose of this study to determine whether the variables of age, race, gender, program completion, and level of charge are statistically significant predictors of recidivism among program participants. Determining the strength of the relationships between recidivism and the independent variables should add context to the analysis while showing relationships between variables that may not show significance within the models.

## **ANALYSIS**

### Bivariate Chi Square Analysis

All Independent variables, with the exclusion of AGE, were run through Chi-square tests by county to determine if significant relationships existed, and the strength of the relationships was measured using Cramer's V. AGE is a continuous variable in this study and as such cannot be included in a Chi square analysis. If Age were broken up into blocks and analyzed as a categorical variable it could then be incorporated into a Chi square analysis. However, since Chi square tests compare counts and not means it would attempt to compare counts for each individual age which would result in a lot of confusion.

To begin, all independent variables were compared with the dependent variables Rearrest and NoRearrest , or Noncompletion and Complete in the case of Palm Beach County, to determine if any relationships between independent and dependent variables occurred. These analyses were conducted by county. Cramer's V was used to determine the strength of any existing relationships between variables. All results from the bivariate analysis are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Variable Relationships by Means of Chi-Square Tests**

	Palm Beach County 2005-2010			Broward County 2007-2009			Seminole County 2009-2012		
	df	Approx. Sig.	Cramer's V	df	Approx. Sig.	Cramer's V	df	Approx. Sig.	Cramer's V
Female	1	.037 (8%)	.069	1	.063 (7%)	.079	1	.316 (17%)	.038
Black	1	.016 (23%)	.080	1	.284 (39%)	.045	1	.907 (9%)	.005
Hispanic	1	.134 (2%)	.050	--	--	--	1	.647 (4.4%)	.019
Noncompletion	--	--	--	1	.000 (12%)	.291	1	.208 (11%)	.048
Misdemeanor	1	.435 (22%)	.051	1	.000 (23%)	.476	1	.927 (12%)	.004

Identifying relationships by county.

Approx. Sig.: Relationship between variables exists at  $p < .05$

Cramer's V:  $V \leq .3$  it is a weak relationship,  $V \geq .4$  it is a strong relationship as it is closer to 1.0.

(%): Show percentages of cross tab counts between independent variable and dependent variable.

The independent variables of Female and Black have weak relationships to the Noncompletion dependent variable in the Palm Beach County data set. 23% of the Black population opted out of the Palm Beach County reentry program in comparison to the 20% of the White and Hispanic populations who did not complete the program. No relationship exists between the dependent variable of Noncompletion and the independent variables of Hispanic and Misdemeanor. This could reflect a low level of significance for the Female and Black predictor variables in the Binary Logistic Regression model for Palm Beach County.

Moderate to strong relationships between Rearrest and the predictor variables of Noncompletion and Misdemeanor were present in the Broward County data set. 23% of misdemeanor offenders were rearrested after participating in the DRRD Broward County reentry program. This is in comparison to 34% of felony offenders. Unfortunately, neither of these predictor variables will be included in the Broward County binary logistic model due to missing cases. There are no available cases of the Noncompletion or Misdemeanor variable to correspond with the NoRearrest dependent variable in the analysis. The other predictor variables of Female and Black had no significant relationship to Rearrest.

No significant relationships were present in any of the predictor variables for Rearrest in the Seminole County data set. With none of the predictor variables having any relationship to Rearrest, it may indicate a lack of significance for the set of predictors in the Seminole County Binary Logistic Model.

### Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

As both the dependent and independent variables in this study are dichotomous, with the exception of the continuous variable AGE, it was appropriate to execute a binary logistic regression in order to calculate the predictive nature of the independent variables. (Knoke, Bohrnstedt, and Mee 2002). Discerning the predictive nature of the independent, or predictor, variables describes their effect on recidivism for program participants and whether that effect is positive, negative, or not significant (Gay and Cambell 1991). In this binary regression analysis each model is only representative of the confining time frames of each data set. For

example, the results for the Palm Beach model are cumulative for the years 2005-2010.

Models were created for each of the three data sets shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Binary Logistic Regression of Recidivism**

	Model 1 2005-2010	Model 2 2007-2009	Model 3 2009-2012
	Palm Beach County	Broward County	Seminole County
Independent Variables			
AGE	.011* (1.011)	-.055*** (.947)	-.013 (.987)
Female	-.237 (.789)	-.414 (.661)	-.358* (.699)
Black	.359** (1.431)	-.250 (.779)	.030 (1.031)
Hispanic	.741** (2.097)	+	-.007 (.993)
Noncompletion	+	+	-.096 (.909)
Misdemeanor	+	+	.115 (1.122)
Constant	.001*** (.244)	.000*** (.326)	.124 (1.133)
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1199.628**	708.172***	574.635
Pseudo R Square	.022	.090	.018

Note: Logistic Cell Entries are Log-odds (Odds Ratio) \*\*\*p<.01; \*\*p<.05; \*p<.10

Binary Logistic Regression by County

### Palm Beach County

Model 1 includes the predictor variables of AGE, Female, Black and Hispanic. Noncompletion is the dichotomous dependent variable (Noncompletion = 1; Complete =0) in this model and as such cannot speak to its predictability of Rearrest among program participants in the Palm Beach data set. This model is significant ( $p < .01$ ) with a likelihood-ratio Chi Square of 1199.628 and a pseudo- r square of .022. For each added year in the AGE of a program participant there is an increase in the log-odds, of opting out of the reentry program by .011 ( $p < .01$ ). Being female decreases the log-odds of opting out of the program by .211 ( $p < .01$ ) in comparison to males. Black program participants have a higher log-odds to opt out of the program than Whites by .431 ( $p < .01$ ). Lastly, Hispanic program participants have a higher log-odds of opting out by .097 ( $p < .01$ ) in comparison to Whites. The predictor variables of AGE, Black, and Hispanic are statistically significant with the dependent variable of Noncompletion. The predictor variable of Female was not significant. Results from this model reflect only the data obtained from the Project R.E.A.P. Success reentry program located in Palm Beach County, Florida.

### Broward County

Model 2 includes the predictor variables of AGE, Female, and Black. The dichotomous dependent variable used in this Model is Rearrest (Rearrest = 1; NoRearrest = 0). This Model is significant ( $p < .01$ ) with a likelihood-ratio Chi Square of 708.172 and pseudo- r square of .090. For each additional year in the AGE of a program participant, there is a decrease in log-odds of

being re-arrested by .053 ( $p < .01$ ). Female program participants decrease in log-odds of being re-arrested by .339 ( $p < .01$ ). Log-odds decreased by .221 ( $p < .01$ ) for Blacks in comparison to Whites for being re-arrested. Only AGE was statistically significant in this model. Results from this model reflect only the data obtained from the Day Reporting and Reentry Division in Broward County, Florida.

### Seminole County

Model 3 includes in all independent predictor variables. They are AGE, Female, Black, Hispanic, Noncompletion, and Misdemeanor. The dichotomous dependent variable is the same as model 2 (Rearrest =1; NoRearrest = 0). This model is not significant ( $p < .01$ ) with a likelihood-ratio Chi Square of 7574.635 and pseudo- r square of .018. For each added year in the AGE of a program participant there is a decrease in log-odds of re-arrest by .013( $p < .01$ ). Being female decreases the log-odds of re-arrest by .301 ( $p < .01$ ) in comparison to males. Black program participants have a higher log-odds of re-arrest than Whites by .031 ( $p < .01$ ). Hispanic program participants have decreased log-odds of re-arrest by .007 ( $p < .01$ ) in comparison to Whites. Program participants that opt out of the program have a decrease in log-odds of re-arrest in comparison to those who complete the program by .091 ( $p < .01$ ). Lastly, misdemeanor program participants have a higher log-odds of re-arrest by 1.122 ( $p < .01$ ) in comparison to felony participants. Only the predictor variable of Female was significant in this model. Results from this model reflect only the data obtained from the Healing and Transition Reentry Program in Seminole County, Florida.



## DISCUSSION

As each model acts as a separate entity due to the differences in time frames and missing data only similarities and differences can be drawn between them. Frequencies from the three data sets show that the mean age for program participants is between 27 and 35 years of age. However, the age at which the highest participant frequencies across all three data sets are found is between 21 and 22 years of age. This supports the notion that most criminal activity takes place between adolescence (teenagers) and the offenders early 20's (Kerner 2005). With age being a continuous variable a determination of the strength of the relationship between age and predictability to re-offend was not possible. The Freudenberg et. al. (2007) study indicates that the relationship between age and recidivism can be attributed to the offenders' developmental stage in life. In this New York based study it was shown that adolescents (teenagers) and offenders in their 20's were less likely to be married and gain income through criminal activities. Though the strength of the relationship could not be obtained through the use of a Chi square test it was found to be significant in both the Palm Beach County and Broward County regression models. Conversely the findings from both counties refer to different dependent variables and are significant in different directions. In the Palm Beach County model age indicated that the older a participant, the more likely they would opt out of the program. As previously discussed in this paper this could be attributed to re-arrest and does not definitively prove recidivism. For Broward County this likelihood moved in the opposite direction indicating that as the age of the program participant increased the likelihood

of re-arrest decreased. Desistance from criminal activity can occur at any age. Laub and Sampson (2001) highlight possible factors that aid in desistance from criminal activities at different ages. Marriage, family, and acquiring gainful employment can motivate an offender to terminate illegal activities. Laub and Sampson (2001) also point out that offenders who begin their criminal careers during adolescence are more likely to have lengthy criminal careers up through their 30's. This could account for the difference in findings between Palm Beach County and Broward County. Disparities between these two findings could also be attributed to the differing services offered by each program in regards to fulfilling criminogenic risk/needs. Another contributing factor could be ascertained by population characteristics, meaning the variance between the two data sets may be attributed to differences in the jail and county populations. Age data from the Seminole County program exhibited no significance and could not be deemed a strong predictor of re-arrest.

Race (Black) was found to have a weak relationship to opting out of the reentry program in Palm Beach County and no relationship to re-arrest in either Broward County or Seminole County. This was supported in the binary logistic regression model for Palm Beach. Of all three program models Black was only a significant predictor in the Palm Beach model. As such, being Black increased the likelihood of opting out of the Palm Beach reentry program in comparison to being White. This is not surprising as Black offenders are more likely to reoffend within three years of being released (Jung et.al. 2010). The Jung et.al. (2010) study found that the highest rates of recidivism for their jail-based study transpired in the first year post release. The Hispanic ethnicity variable was also only significant in the Palm Beach model. Similarities

between counties could not be ascertained for Hispanic due to a lack of significance in the Seminole count data set and the exclusion of this variable from the Broward County data set. The Palm Beach model showed that being Hispanic increased the likelihood of opting out. This is surprising since the Chi square test revealed that no relationship existed between Hispanic and opting out of the Palm Beach County reentry program.

Noncompletion and Misdemeanor had no predictable power in re-arrest for the Palm Beach County and Broward County binary logistic regression models. Seminole County was the only model where these variables could be included in the regression analysis. Strong relationships between Noncompletion and Misdemeanor were present in the Broward County bivariate Chi square test demonstrating that if they had been able to be included in the binary logistic regression model for Broward County they most likely would have displayed high levels of significance in predicting re-arrest among program participants. Unfortunately due to missing data these variables had to be excluded from the Broward County model. Program completion and level of charge can be associated with criminal history as in the Laub and Sampson (2001) and the Kerner (2005) studies. From these studies it is believed that the influences of program completion and level of charge would be strong predictors of recidivism since they are intertwined with the offenders' life course. With the inclusion of Noncompletion and Misdemeanor only being applicable to the Seminole County model, it cannot be accepted or rejected as a possible predictor for recidivism from this study.

Gender (Female) was found to have a weak relationship with opting out of the Palm Beach reentry program. No relationship was reported between Female and re-arrest for Broward or Seminole County. Nonetheless, a low level of significance for Female was present in the Seminole County binary logistic regression model, which represented the only level of significance in the Seminole County model. This low level of significance reports that females are less likely to be re-arrested after participating in the Seminole County reentry program than males. A reason for the only level of significance being found in the Seminole County data could be related to that in this model women outnumbered men, in comparison to Palm Beach County and Broward County. Though the significance in these findings is small it does reflect the notion that women are less likely to recidivate (Berman 2005; Laub and Sampson 2001; White et.al. 2008). It also is in accordance with the BJS (Glaze 2009) statistics that showed 85% of female offenders were under some form of community supervision in comparison to 66% of males.

As a whole this study is only able to somewhat support the hypothesis that a program participants' AGE can be a predictor of recidivism. Results from the Palm Beach model and the Broward model, combined with frequency data, identify that the age of a reentry program participant could be used in predicting recidivism and program completion. Contextual factors that would describe how recidivism and program completion can be determined by the age of the program participant can only be left to speculation in this study. Insufficient data and lack of significance among the independent variables of race, gender, program completion, and level of charge in this analysis provide no clear perspective of their ability to be used as

predictors for recidivism or program completion. This not to say that in future research that they cannot be used as predictors but merely that more research is needed to ascertain their viability as predictor factors of analysis.

A number of limitations are present in this analysis. The first is the transient nature of jails. Due to the relatively short terms of incarceration related to jails, i.e., typically 30 days to less than one year, the focus population of this study could not include offenders who were not in jail long enough to partake in the available reentry program. This is also true for inmates who did not have access to the programs as is seen in the Seminole County reentry program where only inmates housed in the J, K, L, and M dorms had readily available access while incarcerated. The varying completion time frames and program structures of the three jail-based reentry programs used in this study did not allow for an annual comparison of trends between programs. If this had been possible it would have only been able to include data from 2009-2010 which is where all three reentry programs overlapped. Also, recidivism rates are based on re-arrests records. This makes it impossible to account for any criminal activity for which an arrest was not made. If an offender moves or commits a crime outside of the jurisdiction of the county under study, the re-arrest could not be included in the analysis. The biggest limitation of this research study was missing data. Palm Beach does not collect re-arrest data on program participants which forced the dependent variable to become program completion. This voided program completion from being assessed as a predictor variable in the Palm Beach County model. Missing data from 288 cases in the Broward County data set eliminated the inclusion of program participation and level of charge from the binary logistic regression model. Because of

this exclusion, level of charge and program completion could not be assessed to determine their validity as predictor variables of recidivism in the Broward model. Data on Hispanic program participation is not collected by the Broward County program and as such could also not be included or assessed. Only the Seminole County based reentry program had data available for all of the predictor and dependent variables in this analysis. The lack of significance produced by the Seminole County model is speculated to be related to its limited history; as it is only entering its third year of existence.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this analysis have done little to determine the predictable power that age, race/ethnicity, gender, level of charge, and program completion has on the recidivism of jail-based reentry program participants. Neither has it aided in reducing the gap in jail-based reentry literature. Even though this analysis did not produce significant or desired results it does carry promise for future research. By using this analysis as a basis more appropriate data sets can be identified. Characteristics of such data sets should include a minimum of five years of available data. Allowing for this amount of time, the jail-based reentry program should have developed a sustainable structured process which employs a criminogenic risk/needs assessment tool. Since analyzing demographic characteristics yielded such limited results in this analysis future research may want to focus on criminogenic factors as predictors of recidivism and utilize demographics in a more contextual way.

Future jail-based reentry research that continues to focus on demographic factors as predictor variables should also incorporate community demographics in the analysis. Racial demographics and social economic status of a community may aide in explaining any disproportions in the offender population. For instance, if a community is disproportionately Black and/or Hispanic it will be reflected in the racial make-up of the jail population. Poverty has been pointed out as criminogenic factor. By incorporating the social economic status of areas surrounding the jail population a better understanding of the monetary motivations of criminals can be explored.

As for the future of this study, a continuation is planned. With continued cooperation of the Healing and Transition program (HAT) in Seminole County a follow up study will take place. Allowing for additional time to pass before re-analysis will provide the program time to become more established and produce a larger sample. Out of the three programs analyzed in this study, HAT provided the most complete and detailed information. Though not utilized in this study, HAT collects extensive criminogenic related data including housing, employment, health needs, family services, counseling, character development and social support networks. Without comparative data available through the other programs in this study these criminogenic risk/needs could not be included in the analysis. However, the follow up HAT based study can and will include these criminogenic factors. Assessments of the amount of time an offender takes to recidivate post release will be documented to determine when the offender is at the highest risk for re-arrest. Any deterrence factors will also be noted. Another interesting fact that sets HAT apart from the Palm Beach County and Broward County is that they are a faith based organization that is community based and not associated with the jail or the court. Most reentry research is based on programs run by jails and prisons. By continuing this research in the future the faith based HAT program can give contrast to current research.



**APPENDIX:  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
 Office of Research & Commercialization  
 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**  
 To: **Mindy M. Weller**  
 Date: **May 07, 2012**

Dear Researcher:

On 5/7/2012, the IRB approved the following human participant research until 5/6/2013 inclusive:

Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form  
 Project Title: A Look at the Effectiveness of Reentry Programs at the Jail Level  
 Investigator: Mindy M Weller  
 IRB Number: SBE-12-08425  
 Funding Agency:  
 Grant Title:  
 Research ID: N/A

The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 5/6/2013, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewska, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., CF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 05/07/2012 11:25:15 AM EDT

IRB Coordinator

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